PATTERNS OF POWER · THE OTTOMAN CLASSICAL AGE

The Ottoman Classical Age

The Complete Study · 1300 — 1453 — 1826 · an empire that forbade inheritance at every level of itself, and the direction in which it failed

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with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

CONTENTS

The study runs as a landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own title.

Preface · PREFACE AND OUTLINE
- **Landscape** · THE PAWNED CROWN AND THE HUNDRED FORTRESSES
- **Module 1** · NINE YEARS AND FIFTY-THREE DAYS
- **Module 2** · THEY WERE NOT VALID
- **Module 3** · BOTH REBELS AND UNBELIEVERS
- **Module 4** · THOSE WHO HAVE EXITED
- **Module 5** · A FIRMAN FROM THE SULTAN HIMSELF
- **Module 6** · TWELVE AKÇE FOR BARLEY WORTH TWENTY-THREE
- **Module 7** · THE FIRMANS NOBODY HAS SEEN
- **Module 8** · LET ACTION BE TAKEN ACCORDINGLY
- **Module 9** · THE SUBSTANCE BELONGS TO GOD
- **Module 10** · THEIR CAULDRONS OVERTURNED
- **Module 11** · THE LOAVES WERE COUNTED
- **Module 12** · WHAT COULD NOT BE LEFT TO A SON

PREFACE AND OUTLINE

Front matter · how this study was made, the disciplines it holds itself to, and a map of its fourteen parts

The collaboration

This is a case study in the *Patterns of Power* series, applying the series' framework to the Ottoman Empire from its beginnings as one of several Turkish frontier principalities around 1300 to the destruction of the janissary corps by artillery in Istanbul on 15 June 1826. The framework is a lens for reading how any durable order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of force beneath every order, the robe of doctrine laid over the floor to make the force cheap, the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed, the cost column in which each subject prices defection, the default by which an elite coordinates without instruction, and — running beneath all of it — position logic, the proposition that a person in a position decides by what he counts as benefit against what he counts as cost, from where he stands, with the materials at hand, so that rulers in like positions converge on like answers because a position poses a problem with only a few good solutions.

The Ottoman case was chosen for a specific reason and the study found a better one. It was chosen because the collection needed a third answer to the question of where a conquest caste gets its members, alongside an order that kept office open and caste closed by blood, and one that tried to keep both shut while sitting on a doctrine that admitted anybody. What the research produced instead is an empire that ran the most complete experiment any state in this collection attempted, and ran it at every level of the hierarchy at once: **that nothing within the order could be left to a son.**

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying every load-bearing quotation, date and figure by search against a source reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. The framework's concepts are the series'; the Ottoman application, and the refinements it yielded, are the work of the collaboration.

One feature of this particular case shaped the method throughout and should be declared. The Ottoman archives are enormous, are in Ottoman Turkish, and were not read here. Everything in this study about registers, complaint books, endowment accounts and law codes is read at one remove, through the Turkish and Anglophone scholarship, and the study says so wherever the distinction bears weight. Where a primary text survives in a public-domain translation it is quoted exactly. Where it does not, it is reported and the reporting is credited.

The disciplines

Five rules govern every module.

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources — law codes, decrees, endowment deeds, juristic rulings, sermons, inscriptions — are quoted exactly, at the length the argument needs, because in a legal fiction the precise wording *is* the evidence. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly, and credited.

No fabrication. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is ever invented or reconstructed from memory. What cannot be verified is dropped or flagged, never guessed; contested figures are given as ranges, and this case supplies a great many of them.

Gravity without partisanship. Suffering is held with gravity, and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation. Two nationalisms have claimed this material for two centuries — one Ottoman-nostalgic and one Balkan — and neither is adopted. Where an atrocity appears on one side of a war, the atrocity on the other side appears in the same paragraph. The recurring watchword is *legibility is not pardon*: to understand how a thing was done is not to forgive its being done.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case. Those refinements are facets of one finding and are gathered in the final module.

Held as tested, not revealed. The pattern is treated as something discovered and tested against the evidence, not handed down as doctrine — a lens laid over the record, a tendency and never a law. Where the research contradicted the study's own working hypotheses, and it did so repeatedly, the research was followed.

What this study added to the framework

Because this empire enforced non-heritability at every level of its hierarchy simultaneously, and enforced it for longer than anyone else attempted, it made visible things the other cases obscure.

The central finding is that the rule failed in one direction at every level, and failed first where it had never been installed: the learned hierarchy, whose property and descent were always outside the machine, consolidated into a nobility of the law across the century after 1550; the household corps followed, obtaining marriage, then the enrolment of its sons, and abandoning the child levy not by decree but because the men it had made preferred their own children; the revenue farms were sold for life from 1695 and in tradable shares from the 1770s; and in 1808 a sultan's government signed a compact declaring provincial estates inheritable. **Every link that acquired the power to transmit its position to its sons thereafter defended the transmission rather than the arrangement** — which converts the framework's audit of elite coordination into a dated instrument, since the moment a stratum acquires heritability is the moment its answer changes.

From that follow the comparative claim the study rests on — that a state which prevents inheritance prevents an aristocracy, and thereby prevents everything an aristocracy produces, including the bodies that constrain rulers — and a series of narrower refinements: a fourth settlement fiction, *eminent domain*, whose job is to make every holding revocable, and the rule beneath all four that the direction of a settlement's conversion is set by whether the conqueror needs a market or an army; that a grant purchasing armed service is dangerous only where the grant is secure; a third case for the medium-of-payment test, in which the compulsion falls not on the body but on the crop; that an extraction rate ratchets by repetition rather than legislation; that an order pays for withheld formation only where it needs the withheld population's conviction for something; that surveillance tracks the belief a state is installing rather than the strangeness of the people it rules; that an interpreter class may be *subcontracted* rather than occupied or captured, which from underneath is indistinguishable from liberty; that an employed clergy has a veto only where its property and descent lie outside the ruler's reach, and that the veto is a licence rather than a lever; that an apex can price defection low without managing belief at all by supplying the producer a remedy against his immediate extractor, and thereby makes itself the only possible defendant; that where no legal person exists, liberties migrate into devotional forms; that the cost column can empty for the apex rather than the subjects, so that the floor turns around; and that a gift creates an auditor and a taking does not, which is why this archive can count the loaves of a Jerusalem kitchen and cannot count the children of the levy.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own evocative title.

Landscape — the two orders on the eve. **The Pawned Crown and the Hundred Fortresses.** A Christian world a millennium deep in its own naturalised conquests, pawning its regalia to hire soldiers, and a Turkish frontier world two centuries into its own and still improvising — establishing that a half-built conquest is porous where a finished one is not, and that belief makes obedience cheap without making soldiers cheap.

1 — The Floor of Force. **Nine Years and Fifty-Three Days.** How an army that could not take a walled town became the army that took Constantinople, assembled in five layers each laid to repair the defect of the last, none of them discarded: a conquest floor is a stratigraphy, not an event.

2 — The Settlement. **They Were Not Valid.** The cadastral register and the doctrine that the sovereign holds the bare ownership of everything, so that thirty-seven thousand livings bought eighty thousand horsemen at almost no expense to the treasury — and the peasant held a better title than the man who took his tithe.

3 — The Robe. **Both Rebels and Unbelievers.** The coats the dynasty wore and the audiences each was cut for; and the position of the jurists, who drew the sultan's salary, could be dismissed at will, and were the only branch of his ruling class whose houses and sons he could not take.

4 — Formation. **Those Who Have Exited.** Two systems in one empire — nothing for the majority, a ladder for the faith's own sons, and the most intensive formation in the world for a few thousand children taken from the conquered — and the population the state pressed hardest and lost.

5 — The Cost Column. **A Firman from the Sultan Himself.** Why the man whose labour made the surplus did not revolt: a registered title, his own religion, a usable court and a documented road to the throne — and the decade in which the ledger turned over and he left.

6 — Extraction. **Twelve Akçe for Barley Worth Twenty-Three.** What was taken, in what form and at whose price; how an emergency levy became permanent without anyone deciding it; and the two dated statutes by which a state built on revocable claims sold the claims themselves.

7 — Information and Suppression. **The Firmans Nobody Has Seen.** An empire with almost no censorship apparatus and a printing prohibition that appears to have been composed in Paris — and a seam held not by an imperial censor but by community heads the sultan appointed and could remove.

8 — Elite Coordination and the Default. **Let Action Be Taken Accordingly.** The chain audited link by link, from the throne to the provincial magnate; how an arrangement in which each man defended his own position defended the whole; and the dated moment each link began defending something else.

9 — Plurality or Foreclosure. **The Substance Belongs to God.** An empire with no assembly, no estates, no chartered town and no legal person; the four real protections that existed anyway; and which factional quarrel inside the hierarchy each was the residue of.

10 — Change and Collapse. **Their Cauldrons Overturned.** Not the empire's end but the settlement's; how an apex destroyed its own conquest caste once it had built another army first; and the one case in which subjects did win, and the reason they won.

11 — The Grim Accounting. **The Loaves Were Counted.** Both columns set side by side without a total; the harms that leave no figure because nothing was built; and the question of who wrote every number in the module.

12 — Convergence and Divergence. **What Could Not Be Left to a Son.** The Ottoman answer read against the others in this collection; why the same rule produced both its strength and the absence in it that matters most; and the case for the defence, stated whole and answered.

A note on the sources of this study

The evidentiary position of this case is better than some in the collection and worse than others, and the reader should know its shape.

The Ottoman state was an extraordinary record-keeper and most of what it kept survives. Cadastral surveys, complaint registers, endowment accounts, poll-tax books and provincial law codes exist in quantity in Istanbul. Almost none of it has been read here. This study works from the Turkish and Anglophone scholarship that has read it, and its numbers are therefore that scholarship's numbers, carrying that scholarship's assumptions. Where the modern literature disagrees — and on the abolition of the child levy, the size of the corps, the toll of the Kızılbaş purges and the casualties at Chios it disagrees very widely — the disagreement is reported rather than resolved.

Three specific cautions run through the whole. Ottoman quantities derived from the fiscal registers are orders of magnitude and not counts, and Heath Lowry's critique of building demographic and social history on those records applies to every figure in this study. Contemporary European accounts of the empire are vivid, quotable and out of copyright, and were written by hostile or fascinated outsiders with limited access; they are used and are always identified as what they are. And the historiography of the

empire's Balkan provinces has been written for two centuries by parties with a stake in the answer, on both sides, which is why this study prints the massacre at Tripolitsa in the same paragraph as the massacre at Chios.

Finally, the study's own working hypotheses were wrong more often than they were right, and the corrections are on the page rather than buried. The floor that held this empire was not the janissary corps but a five-layer accretion of which the corps was the fourth answer. The famous prohibition on printing appears never to have been issued. And the guess that a slave elite harvested at home would be more securely severed than one bought abroad turned out to be exactly backwards: an imported caste expires when the importing stops, and a home-harvested one takes root.

THE PAWNED CROWN AND THE HUNDRED FORTRESSES

Landscape · the orders on the eve — a Christian world a millennium deep in its own naturalised conquests and selling its regalia to pay for soldiers, and a Turkish frontier world two centuries into its own and still improvising, set side by side before the crossing into Europe

Two ledgers

In August 1343 the Empress Anna of Savoy, governing Constantinople as regent for a nine-year-old emperor and unable to pay the men holding Thrace, pawned the imperial crown jewels to Venice. Years of war had emptied the treasury; the jewels raised thirty thousand ducats; and Turkish raiding across Thrace had by then left the capital short of food. The regalia of the Roman Empire were now collateral in a Venetian counting-house, and the empire that had pledged them was fighting a civil war against its own former regent, who was himself being kept in the field by Turkish cavalry.

A decade earlier a Moroccan lawyer travelling through north-western Anatolia had stopped at Bursa and taken the measure of the Turkish lord who had captured it seven years before. Orhan, he judged, was "the greatest of the kings of the Turkmens" and the wealthiest in lands and troops; he held close to a hundred fortresses; he spent most of his life riding between them, staying a few days at each to put its condition right, and was said never to have passed a whole month in any one town.

Two ledgers, a decade apart, in territories a few days' ride from one another. One order is selling the objects that stand for its authority in order to hire the force that authority can no longer command. The other has no treasury worth the name, no bureaucracy, no coinage of consequence, and a ruler who cannot sit still — and it is accumulating.

The temptation is to read this as decadence meeting vigour, and every later narrative on both sides was built to encourage it: the Ottoman chroniclers of the fifteenth century needed a dynasty chosen by God, and the Greek and Latin writers needed a scourge sent to punish sin. The colder question is what each society actually *was* on the eve — how each held its people, how deeply each had driven its belief, and how much force each had to spend to keep its shape. Asked that way, 1300 to 1354 is not civilisation meeting barbarism. It is a fully naturalised conquest, a millennium deep and no longer aware that it was ever built, meeting a half-built one that was still arguing

about its own boundaries — and the difference in *stage*, not in creed, is what governs almost everything that follows.

This study will read the Ottoman order that grew out of that meeting as a sequence of answers, each given by a man standing somewhere specific, with the materials that were actually to hand, to the problem immediately in front of him — and each answer, once it worked, generating the next problem. Nothing in what follows was designed. The devshirme, the timar register, the fratricide clause, the cage, the tax farm: each will be found to be a solution that fitted a position, held for a while, and then produced the difficulty its successor had to answer. The landscape's task is to establish the first position exactly enough that the first answer can be read.

The order that had already been built four times

The Christian world the Turks were entering had been made, unmade and remade so often that by 1300 none of it any longer felt made at all.

Beneath everything lay the Roman conquest, and on top of that the Christianisation of the empire from the fourth century — a state religion imposed by imperial policy long before it was the furniture of anyone's mind. Then came a demographic overturning as total as anything the Turks would later achieve: the incursions of Slavs and proto-Bulgarians into the Balkan lands in the sixth and seventh centuries did severe damage to the existing ecclesiastical organisation and greatly complicated the work of Christianisation, and the Bulgars themselves — a tribe of Turkic origin that had settled in the peninsula at the end of the seventh century — arrived pagan, ruling a Slav population that was itself newly arrived.

The Balkan Orthodoxy that the Ottomans would later be accused of extinguishing was therefore installed by a state, from above, within recorded memory of its own imposition. Boris of Bulgaria, having intended to take his Christianity from Rome, was pushed by an unsuccessful war with the Byzantines into accepting the Orthodox faith of Constantinople in 864; he was baptised at night, in secret, by a Byzantine bishop, together with his family and the nobles who backed the policy. It did not take quietly. In 865 malcontents from all ten administrative districts rose against him, accusing him of having given them "a bad law", and moved on the capital meaning to kill him and restore the old religion. He put the rising down and the new faith stayed.

Four and a half centuries later that faith was simply what a Bulgarian or a Serb *was*. The origin had not been forgotten — the church remembered its founders and celebrated them — but it had ceased to be experienced as an origin. This is the tell of a conquest that has fully taken: not amnesia, but the conversion of a known imposition into one's own authentic civilisation, so that a man will die for a thing his great-great-

grandfather's kin were executed for resisting, and see no contradiction, because there is none. The Orthodoxy of the fourteenth-century Balkans was a built thing that had become entirely real, which makes it more durable than a lie and not less genuine — and naming its manufactured beginning is not a way of diminishing it, but the only way to see what it later did.

The Turkish presence in Anatolia was the same process, two centuries in and nowhere near finished. Turkic groups had been moving into Anatolia in search of pasture since the 1030s; after the Seljuk victory at Manzikert in 1071 the commander Suleiman ibn Qutalmish took Nicaea and Nicomedia and founded the principality that became the Sultanate of Rum. That sultanate is worth holding in view precisely because of what it was not: its official religion was Sunni Islam and its official and literary language Persian, while the majority of its population remained Greek Orthodox. A Turco-Persian Muslim apex sitting on a Christian countryside, in a state named for Rome. Speros Vryonis, whose account of the Islamisation of Asia Minor remains the standard one, insisted on the point that matters here: the peninsula the Turks entered was not empty or exhausted but a vital society that had to be subdued and absorbed, and it was not completely subdued and reunified until the late fifteenth century, when the Ottomans moved south and east out of Bithynia. In 1300 that absorption was mid-process. The frontier was not a line but a wide zone in which Greek and Turk, Christian and Muslim, farmer and herdsman were mixed, intermarried, and frequently changed sides.

Then the Mongols removed the roof. On 26 June 1243 at Köse Dağ, the Mongol general Baiju destroyed the army of Sultan Kaykhusraw II, and Rum survived as a Mongol and then Ilkhanid vassal until its last sultan was killed in 1308. What that produced in western Anatolia was not chaos but a particular kind of opportunity: the Seljuk centre at Konya had governed its borders by appointing frontier lords — *uç beys*, marcher lords, the same institution and much the same word as the European march — to hold the marches against Byzantium, and when the centre lost the power to command them, the marcher lords simply kept what they held. A dozen or more principalities emerged. In the beginning the strongest were inland — the Karamanids and the Germiyanids — while the principality of Osman's house, in the north-west around Söğüt, was at that stage small and militarily modest.

What the Latins did in 1204

One episode in the Christian order's history has to be set down here, because without it the behaviour of Orthodox elites for the next two hundred and fifty years is unreadable.

In March 1204, before Constantinople had fallen, the crusaders and the Venetians signed a treaty dividing the Byzantine lands between them. The city was taken in April; the Venetians took three-eighths of it along with Crete, Euboea and a string of strategic points; Baldwin of Flanders was crowned Latin emperor in Hagia Sophia and received the remaining five-eighths together with Thrace and north-western Asia Minor; Boniface of Montferrat took Thessalonica. The Latin Empire held the city for fifty-seven years, until Michael VIII Palaiologos recovered it in 1261.

The empire that came back in 1261 was a different object: territorially reduced, financially broken, and permanently dependent on the Italian maritime republics whose fleets it could no longer do without. But the more consequential residue was in the minds of Orthodox churchmen and Orthodox lords, for whom the Western Christian had now been established, in living institutional memory, as the power that sacked the city, desecrated the churches, deposed the patriarch and partitioned the empire by treaty. When later in this study an Orthodox hierarchy is found accommodating a Muslim conqueror with a speed that has embarrassed nationalist historians ever since, the position from which that accommodation was made will already have been fixed here — not by any love of the Turk, but by a straightforward comparison between two conquerors, one of whom had demanded the surrender of the faith itself and had already once taken the city to enforce it.

A state that could no longer pay for its own floor

The Palaiologan restoration inherited an arithmetic that could not be made to work, and the responses to it are worth stating precisely, because they are position logic in its plainest form — a man with an empty treasury choosing which of his instruments to sell first.

Andronikos II found his father's finances unsustainable and in 1285 dismantled the imperial fleet, which threw the empire's naval defence onto Genoa; he devalued the hyperpyron; the treasury took in less than a seventh of the revenue it had previously collected; and he raised taxes and cut exemptions to compensate. The fleet scrapped ran to some eighty ships, and the gold content of the hyperpyron fell to around fourteen carats by 1304 and to about twelve later in the reign, while the army was reduced and the *pronoiarioi* — the holders of revenue assignments who supplied its cavalry — were taxed more heavily and granted less. Britannica's summary is blunt about the sequence: the emperor unwisely economised by cutting the army and disbanding the navy.

The consequences arrived in order. Mercenaries had to be hired because soldiers no longer existed, and mercenaries have their own interests: the Catalan Company, brought in against the Turks, won one success in Anatolia, murdered its employers'

confidence along with its own leader, seized the Gallipoli peninsula as a base from which to ravage Thrace, and invited thousands of Turks across to help; the Catalans left for Athens in 1311 and the Turks they had brought were not cleared from Gallipoli until 1312. Every element of the disaster of 1354 is present in that sentence forty years early, including the location.

Meanwhile the frontier in Asia gave way. On 27 July 1302 an Ottoman force under Osman defeated a Byzantine army under George Mouzalon at Bapheus, near Nicomedia — a date some scholarship, following Halil İnalcık, would place a year earlier. The battle's importance is not tactical. It triggered a mass flight of the Christian population of the region into the European provinces, altering the demographic balance, and together with the collapse at Magnesia it announced the final loss of Asia Minor — though the conquest of Bithynia was gradual and the last Byzantine outpost there, Nicomedia, held out until 1337. A state that cannot protect a province loses the province twice: once to the enemy and once to the emigration of its own taxpayers.

Then the empire spent the middle of the century at war with itself. The civil war of 1341–1347 opened on the death of Andronikos III, with a regency for the nine-year-old John V on one side and John Kantakouzenos, proclaimed emperor at Didymoteichon, on the other; each side hired foreigners, Kantakouzenos taking Turkish help from Aydın and then from Orhan while the regency drew in Stefan Dušan of Serbia, who used the opportunity to take Macedonia. Anti-aristocratic risings broke out in the cities, most famously that of the Zealots at Thessalonica, and by the end of 1345 almost everything outside Thessalonica, Serres and Berroia had passed to the Serbs. The plague reached Constantinople in 1347. The crown jewels were already in Venice.

This is the state of the floor on the eve, and it should be described exactly rather than morally. The Byzantine peasantry was not in revolt. The belief that made the emperor lawful was not in doubt among the governed. What had failed was narrower and more specific: the state could no longer convert its subjects' obedience into soldiers at a price it could pay. An order can sit at its cheap, self-running pole in the villages and still be unable to field an army — and when that happens, the only remaining ways to obtain force are to hire it, to marry it, or to invite it.

Two days and one perper

Before anything is claimed later about what Ottoman rule made lighter or heavier, the "before" has to be on the page in its own words, because both of the stories usually told about this — the Ottoman-nostalgic account of tolerance and the Balkan national

account of a yoke — were composed centuries afterwards for present purposes, and neither is evidence about 1349.

The evidence about 1349 is the code that Stefan Dušan promulgated at Skopje on 21 May of that year, three years after he had himself crowned Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks at Skopje on 16 April 1346 by a newly elevated Serbian patriarch. Its provision for the dependent cultivator is short and complete: "The law for the serfs on all the land: they shall work two days for the fief-holder and shall give him one imperial perper annually, and they shall mow his hay with all their household one day, and work his vineyard" — with a day of other labour substituted where a man had no vines. The code also fixed what could not be done to him: whatever the serf produced beyond that was his lord's, but nothing outside the law was to be taken from him, and, in a later clause, no master might act against a serf contrary to the law, and every serf was authorised to sue his lord — including the emperor, the empress and the church — before the imperial judges, who were to judge according to justice, with the lord forbidden to retaliate afterwards.

That last clause deserves to be taken seriously rather than dismissed as decoration. A law that never binds the powerful cannot make their power cheap; the code's constraints on lords are the mechanism working as designed, not evidence of hypocrisy. But the same code states the settlement's shape without embarrassment. Slaves were the lord's patrimony and their children his eternal patrimony. A lord who killed a commoner paid a thousand perpers; a commoner who killed a lord lost both hands and paid three hundred. "Commoners shall have no council. If anybody is found participating in council, let his ears be cut off, and let the leaders be singed." And on religion the code is explicit in a way that matters for every later comparison: Christians who had gone over to the Latin rite were to be reclaimed by head priests appointed in every market town; a Latin priest found to have converted a Christian was to be punished; a half-believer married to a Christian woman was to be baptised or lose his wife, his children and his house; and any heretic found living among Christians was to be branded on the face and driven out, along with whoever sheltered him.

The Byzantine cultivator's position was structurally similar and administered through different instruments — the *paroikos* attached to an estate, and the *pronoia*, a conditional imperial grant of revenues and privileges, often to soldiers, which had come to characterise the empire's whole social and fiscal order. It is tempting, and it has often been done, to run a straight line from the pronoia to the Ottoman timar. The temptation should be resisted. Mark Bartusis, whose survey of the institution is the comprehensive one, deliberately declined to extend his argument to the timar, and reviewers have noted approvingly that Byzantinists have too often explained Ottoman

institutions by asserted Byzantine origins, the relationship between the two being tenuous and uncertain, deserving investigation rather than assumption. What can be said without straining is narrower and enough: the countryside the Ottomans would take was already organised into villages whose surplus was assigned to a mounted man in exchange for service, and whose cultivators were already accustomed to paying a fixed due to a soldier they did not choose.

The march

Set beside all this, what did Osman actually have?

A frontier district in the broken country around Söğüt and Domaniç; a following estimated at a few thousand lightly armed horsemen; no state structures; and a method that consisted of raiding Byzantine Bithynia where the garrisons were overstretched. His military activity remained largely raiding, because at his death in 1323–4 the Ottomans had still not developed effective siege technique — Bursa fell only on 6 April 1326, after a siege that had run since 1317. He was not the strongest of the marcher lords and had no claim to be.

What he had that the others did not was position. Every other significant principality faced the sea, or the Mongols, or another Turk. Osman's march faced a state — and a state in the specific condition described above, whose fleet had been scrapped, whose field army had been cut, whose emperor was hiring Catalans, and whose Bithynian towns could be starved by preventing a harvest. A frontier is only an asset when there is something on the other side of it worth taking and someone on this side willing to come and take it.

The men who came were not a nation and not a sect. They were Turkoman horsemen looking for pasture and plunder; dervishes of every degree of orthodoxy; and the *akhi* brotherhoods of the towns, the guild-linked fraternities whose lodges the Moroccan traveller found in every Turkish land in Anatolia and whose hospitality to strangers he thought unmatched anywhere in the world. And they included Christians. Köse Mihal, who died around 1340, was a member of the Byzantine provincial aristocracy — the lord of Harmankaya — and became one of Osman's closest associates; Evrenos, who died in 1417, was of Greek or Catalan-Aragonese origin; and the descendants of both founded hereditary dynasties of Ottoman raider-commanders. The early polity's success rested substantially on its ability to mobilise, and in time absorb, exactly such local Christian elites.

What the polity called itself, in the earliest words of its own that survive, is a stone inscription of 1337 on a mosque in Bursa, in which Orhan is titled the great and exalted emir, warrior in God's cause, "sultan of the ghazis, ghazi son of ghazi",

champion of the state and the faith and of the horizons. Paul Wittek built an entire account of Ottoman origins on that stone and on a court poet of about 1402, concluding that the early Ottomans were above all holy warriors moved by an ideology of holy war. The account governed the field for half a century and is now heavily qualified: other Anatolian rulers used the same title, so it cannot mark anything uniquely Ottoman; Heath Lowry has charged Wittek with mistranslating the inscription and selecting from the poem the fraction that suited him, and reframed the early polity as a plundering confederation of Christian and Muslim warlords whose success lay in absorbing Balkan and Byzantine elites; Colin Imber called the thesis a false analysis resting on a term already hollow in Osman's day, and the early Ottoman period a black hole. The honest position is that the word was in use, that it was one of several idioms available on a frontier where plunder, pasture, piety and personal advancement all pointed the same way, and that no surviving fourteenth-century Ottoman source lets anyone weigh the motives of the men who used it. That absence is itself a fact to carry forward: the founding of this empire is known almost entirely through hostile Greek observers writing at the time and loyal Ottoman writers working a century and more later with a dynasty to justify.

The crossing that was invited

The Ottomans did not fight their way into Europe. They were brought.

In the summer of 1346, at Selymbria, John Kantakouzenos married his daughter Theodora to Orhan, and the alliance supplied him with the Ottoman auxiliaries that decided the civil war and put him on the throne at Constantinople in 1347; Theodora remained a Christian at the Ottoman court. Payment for such help took the form of cash and of pronoia estates in Thrace allotted to Turkish warriors and their families. During the renewed civil war of the 1350s the Ottomans were granted the small fortress of Tzympe near Gallipoli, around 1352.

Then chance did what a decade of campaigning had not. On 2 March 1354 an earthquake destroyed hundreds of villages and towns in the region and levelled very nearly every building in Gallipoli, and the Greek inhabitants abandoned the city; within a month Süleyman Pasha, Orhan's son, had seized the site, fortified it, and settled it with Turkish families brought over from Anatolia. Repopulation with Anatolian settlers was deliberate and was extended along the peninsula. John VI offered money for its return. It was not returned.

That is the eve. A conquest that had entered Europe through a father-in-law's need for cavalry and stayed because a wall fell down.

Reading the eve against the framework

The landscape confirms the framework's opening premises and returns two refinements to be carried through the study.

The first concerns the recursion — the rule that a conqueror never meets an aboriginal order, only an earlier conquest naturalised. Both parties here are conquests, which the rule predicts. What the case adds is that they are conquests *at different stages*, and that the stage, rather than the doctrine, governs the shape of the encounter. The Christian order of the Balkans was a millennium deep, built four times over — Roman, Christian, Slav, and then Christianised again from above within recorded memory — and had reached the point where its imposed origin was known and no longer felt. The Turco-Muslim order in Anatolia was two centuries old, still absorbing a Greek Orthodox majority, still governed until recently from Konya and lately from the Mongol court, and still unsettled about what it was: the same decades produce a stone calling Orhan a warrior for the faith and a war-band whose most valuable commander was a Byzantine lord from Harmankaya. The refinement is this: **an unfinished conquest is porous, and a finished one is not** — porosity being a function of the conqueror's own age rather than of his creed, since a boundary that has not yet hardened can admit, and a hardened one cannot. That prediction is testable across the whole arc that follows, and it is the reason to watch, from here on, for the moment at which the Ottoman boundary stops being drawn by service and starts being drawn by descent and creed.

The second concerns the price of a floor, and it corrects an expectation the framework could otherwise carry unexamined. The framework holds that belief, driven deep enough, makes an order cheap to run, because the governed police it themselves. The Byzantine countryside on this eve was exactly that: no serious rising against the emperor's right to rule, an Orthodoxy held as simply true, a peasantry that paid. And the state was nonetheless insolvent, scrapping its fleet, debasing its coin, hiring Catalans, and pawning its crown. Meanwhile a marcher lord with no treasury, no bureaucracy and no coinage of consequence was fielding cavalry without difficulty, because his men were paid out of the conquest itself. So the refinement to make and carry: **belief makes obedience cheap, but it does not make soldiers cheap.** A settled order must buy its force with revenue; a conquest in progress is self-financing, its army paid in the plunder and the land it is in the act of taking. This is why an order can be at its self-running pole among its own people and still lose its borders, and it sets the real question that will govern this entire study — what happens to a conquest state when it stops conquering and has to start paying, which is a question about the Ottoman seventeenth century that begins in the fourteenth.

One discipline follows from both, and it is the reason this landscape has quoted a Serbian law code at length before an Ottoman one has appeared. The comparison that dominates all writing on this subject — whether Ottoman rule was lighter or heavier than what preceded it — cannot be conducted honestly unless the "before" is established on the record's own terms, in advance, and without either of the two nationalisms that have since claimed it. Two days' labour, one perper, hay and vines; a right of suit against one's lord; ears cut off for holding a council; a face branded for heresy. That is the baseline. What was later built over it can now be measured rather than praised or denounced.

A note on sources. Exact primary quotation here is confined to three places. The Code of Stefan Dušan, promulgated at Skopje on 21 May 1349 and revised in 1353–4, is quoted from the English rendering published by the Blago Fund, which makes its material freely available; the clauses used are those on the dependent cultivator's labour and money dues, on the prohibition of commoners' councils, on the serf's right of suit against his lord, and on the treatment of the Latin rite and of heretics, and the original 1349 text is public-domain material whose exact wording is the evidence. The 1337 inscription on the Şehadet mosque at Bursa is quoted in the short form in which it is reproduced across the literature; readers should know that its translation is itself contested, Heath Lowry having charged Paul Wittek with rendering and selecting it to suit his thesis. Ibn Battuta's judgement of Orhan is quoted in eight words from the standard modern English translation and otherwise paraphrased, the Arabic original being fourteenth-century and the translation not. Everything else is paraphrased from reference and scholarly accounts and credited where it carries weight: the Palaiologan fiscal and military retrenchment, including the dismantling of the fleet in 1285 and the debasement of the hyperpyron to roughly fourteen carats by 1304 and about twelve later; the Catalan Company's seizure of Gallipoli and the clearing of the Turks it invited in 1312; Bapheus on 27 July 1302, whose dating İnalcık would move to 1301 and which is given here with that dispute flagged rather than resolved; the civil war of 1341–7, the Zealot risings, the pawning of the crown jewels for thirty thousand ducats in August 1343, and the arrival of plague in 1347; the marriage of Theodora Kantakouzene to Orhan at Selymbria in 1346, the grant of Tzympe around 1352, and the earthquake of 2 March 1354 and Süleyman Pasha's occupation and resettlement of Gallipoli within the month. Figures given as approximations are approximations in the sources: Osman's following of "a few thousand" horsemen and Orhan's "nearly a hundred" fortresses are the record's own vagueness and are not sharpened here. On the Byzantine institutional background, Mark Bartusis's study of the pronoia is followed, including his deliberate refusal to extend the argument to the Ottoman timar, and the

supposed pronoia-to-timar descent is reported as contested rather than adopted. On the Islamisation of Anatolia, Speros Vryonis is paraphrased and credited. On the character of the early polity, the dispute between Wittek's holy-war account and the revisions of Rudi Paul Lindner, Cemal Kafadar, Heath Lowry and Colin Imber is stated rather than settled, as is İnalcık's reading of *ghaza* as a legitimating idiom rather than a programme. The date of the Ottoman foundation, conventionally 1299, rests on later tradition and is not treated here as a fact. No fourteenth-century Ottoman narrative source survives, and that absence has been reported as a limit on what any of this can be made to bear.

NINE YEARS AND FIFTY-THREE DAYS

Module 1 · the floor of force — how an army that could not take a walled town became the army that took Constantinople, assembled in five layers across a century and a half, each laid to repair the defect of the one before it

What the horsemen could not do

The first Ottoman army was not designed. It was what turned up.

It was composed entirely of Turkmen nomads, largely under the command of the religious orders that had converted most of them, armed with bows, arrows and spears, living mostly on booty — though those posted to the border districts or sent to raid Christian lands were also assigned more permanent revenues in the form of taxes levied on the lands they garrisoned, holdings formalised as *mukâṭaʿa*s and held by tribal leaders and ghazi commanders who used them to feed, supply and arm their followers. That last clause is worth marking now, because it is the seed of the whole later settlement: before there was an Ottoman state there was already a working arrangement by which a commander was paid in the tax of the ground he held, and out of it fed the men who held it with him.

Such a force could win in the open. On 27 July 1302 Osman defeated a Byzantine army under George Mouzalon at Bapheus near Nicomedia — a date İnalcık would move back a year — and the victory did what victories on a frontier do, which is attract more men. Osman's following at this stage is estimated at a few thousand lightly armed horsemen operating with no state structures at all.

What it could not do was take a town, and towns were where the money was. Osman's military activity remained largely raiding, because by the time of his death in 1323–4 the Ottomans had still not developed effective siege technique. The consequence is written into the calendar of the founding. The siege of Prusa is dated from 1317 and the city fell only on 6 April 1326 — six or nine years, depending on whose reckoning of the start is followed, and it fell then only because the Ottomans, lacking expertise and adequate siege equipment, had settled for starving it. Nicomedia, threatened with famine as early as 1302 because the raiders roamed the countryside and prevented the harvest being gathered, did not actually fall until 1337. Thirty-five years to reduce one city by hunger.

This is the defect that generated everything else. An army of light horse can strip a province of its harvest and its people; what it cannot do is convert a province into revenue, because revenue lives behind walls, in the towns where the market is taxed and the customs are levied and the registers are kept. A raiding floor produces plunder, and plunder is a stock, not a flow: it is taken once. The men who wanted more than plunder had to find some way of getting through gates, and the search for that way is most of the military history of the next hundred and twenty-seven years.

The founding legend runs the other way, and it is worth setting beside the sieges. Ottoman writers came to attach great importance to a dream in which Osman, sleeping in the house of the dervish Şeyh Edebali, saw a moon rise from his host's breast and sink into his own, and then a tree spring from his body whose shade covered the world. Caroline Finkel's account fixes what matters about it: the story was first communicated in this form in the later fifteenth century, a century and a half after Osman's death, and it became the empire's most durable founding myth precisely because it conferred a sense of temporal and divine authority and explained the dynasty's success at the expense of its competitors. No fourteenth-century record, Byzantine, Seljuk or archaeological, corroborates it. A dynasty that in its first two generations could not force a gate was later given an origin in which the world was handed to it in its sleep. That is not a small discrepancy, and it is the standard shape of a founding narrative: the legend supplies the necessity that the record shows being improvised.

The second defect: an army that plunders its own employer

There was a further problem with the nomad cavalry, and it arrived precisely because they had succeeded.

Those troops predominated through Orhan's reign until he saw that such undisciplined cavalrymen were of limited use in besieging and taking large cities; and, once his state was established, he found it difficult to maintain order with such an army, because the nomads still preferred to maintain themselves by looting — in the lands of their own commander as much as in those of the enemy.

Read that as a position and it stops being a complaint about barbarism. A man who lives by taking does not distinguish between a village belonging to the enemy and a village that has just become his lord's, because the distinction is a fact about somebody else's ledger and not about his own. It only becomes visible when the lord acquires land he intends to keep. The instrument that had built the polity became a charge on it at the exact moment the polity started to own things — which is the recurring shape of this entire case, and it will recur under other names for four hundred years.

The first answer: pay them, but only while they are fighting

To replace the nomads, Orhan organised a separate standing force paid by salary rather than by booty or by revenue assignment: infantry called *yaya*s and cavalry called *müsellem*s. Ottoman tradition attaches the reorganisation to Alaeddin Pasha in the mid-1320s.

Who these men actually were is disputed, and the disagreement should be reported rather than smoothed. Malcolm Yapp's account holds that although the new force included some Turkmens content to take salaries in place of booty, most of its men were Christian soldiers from the Balkans, who were not required to convert to Islam so long as they obeyed their Ottoman commanders. Turkish scholarship on the corps takes the opposite view, describing the yaya and müsellem organisation as composed particularly of Turkmen and nomad Turks, established as the first permanent salaried army under Orhan. A study of the corps calls the yayas originally Turcoman peasants and notes their resemblance both to the Byzantine *stratiotes* and to the *voynuk* organisation of Balkan soldiery that already existed before the Ottoman conquest of the region. The chronology favours the Turkish account for the corps's origin in the 1320s, since there were then no Balkan provinces to recruit from; the Balkan element is likelier to be a later accretion. The study will not pretend to settle it.

What can be established, and what matters more, is the payment arrangement, because it is the shape of a treasury that did not yet exist. The sources report that these men received one *akçe* a day during a campaign, that at the campaign's end the daily payment was cut off and each returned to farm in his own district, and that in exchange for that service they were held exempt from extraordinary taxes. They lived, when not at war, on farms assigned to them, and the districts where those farms were laid out were organised as their own administrative units.

A ruler with cash pays a standing army standing wages. A ruler without cash pays for the campaigning season only and settles the rest of the year in something he can issue for nothing — a permanent exemption from taxes he has not the machinery to collect anyway. This is the first fully visible instance in the case of the pattern this study is tracking: not a design, but the cheapest arrangement available from where the man was standing, which then hardens into an institution and eventually into a problem, because the corps's members, living on their farms and starting families, grew reluctant to go to war at all.

The answer that manufactured a rival

Then the arithmetic turned. As the yayas and müsellems grew in number their salaries became too burdensome for the treasury, so in most cases the newly conquered lands were assigned to their commanders in the form of *timar*s. That new regular army developed the battle and siege techniques with which most of the fourteenth-century Ottoman conquests were achieved — but because it was commanded by members of the Turkish notable class, it became the principal vehicle of that class's rise to predominance over the sultans, whose own direct military support was limited to vassal contingents.

The sequence is worth stating baldly, because it is the whole logic of the case in one paragraph. The sultan could not afford salaries, so he paid in land revenue. Land revenue had to be administered by somebody, so it was administered by the men already commanding. Those men thereby acquired a standing income, a following and a country base, and within two generations the sultan's own army belonged to a class that could bargain with him. Nothing was betrayed and nobody schemed. A solvency problem was solved in the only currency available, and the solution manufactured the rival.

The same thing was happening, faster and more visibly, on the frontier. The older Turkmen cavalry were kept on as irregular shock troops — *akıncı*s — compensated only by booty, and their commanders became dynasties. Köse Mihal, who died around 1340, was a Byzantine provincial aristocrat who joined Osman; Evrenos, who died in 1417, was of Greek or Catalan-Aragonese origin; the descendants of both founded hereditary lines of Ottoman raider-commanders, the Mihaloğulları and the Evrenosoğulları, and the early Ottoman successes rested substantially on the ability to mobilise and in time absorb exactly such local Christian elites. The men conducting the conquest of Rumelia in the sultan's name were therefore, in significant part, hereditary marcher lords with their own retinues, their own conquests and their own descent from the aristocracy of the country being conquered.

That is a floor of force which works extremely well and is not, in any sense the framework would recognise, under the apex's control.

The third answer: a fifth of what was taken

Murad I's response is the most consequential single decision in this study, and it was not an invention. It was a reading.

He based the new force on his right to a fifth of the war booty, which he interpreted to include captives taken in battle. As those men entered his service they were converted

to Islam and trained as Ottomans, acquiring the knowledge and experience required for service in the government as well as the army, while remaining in the sultan's personal service. The *pençik* system — the word is Persian for "one-fifth" — was most probably established in Murad's reign, when his advisers Kara Rüstem and Çandarlı Kara Halil recommended that he take a fifth of the prisoners of war, or their price, as his lawful due. The date at which the Janissary corps was formed out of it is not certain; some sources place it between 1363 and 1365.

Consider the position. A ruler needs a body of soldiers who owe nothing to any Anatolian lineage, hold no land, have no kin in the country, and cannot combine with the notables who command his regular army — and he has no money to buy them with. What he does have is an entitlement, already lawful, already collected, already uncontroversial: the sovereign's fifth of the movable spoils of war. He extends the definition of "movable spoils" to cover human beings taken in battle, and the entitlement becomes an army. He has not raised a tax, invented an institution or asked anyone's permission. He has re-read a clause.

This is what the collection means by working with the materials at hand, and it is also a warning about how such moves look afterwards. The *kul* system, which by the sixteenth century would be the most conspicuous institution in the Islamic world and would be explained by everyone as a considered doctrine of servile government, begins as a fiscal reinterpretation by a man who needed troops he could trust and had a legal share of the loot.

It carried one defect from birth, and the defect governs everything that follows: **a force recruited from captives is a force that depends on continuous successful war.** No campaign, no captives. That constraint will shortly become the whole problem.

The test at Ankara

The three-layer floor — notable-commanded regular army, hereditary marcher lords, and a new slave corps not yet grown — was tested in 1402 and failed.

When Bayezid I abandoned the ghazi tradition and turned into Anatolia, he lost the support of the Turkish notables and their sipahis before his new *kapıkulu* army was fully established; he had therefore to rely at the Battle of Ankara only on the Christian vassal forces, who showed considerable valour and fighting ability and were overwhelmed by Timur's army. The Ottoman army was already heavily outnumbered, and was weakened further when the Black Tatars and the sipahis of the Anatolian beyliks deserted on the field and went over to Timur. The battle was fought on 20 July 1402; Bayezid was captured; and an eleven-year interregnum followed in which his sons

fought for control until Mehmed I secured the throne in 1413. Timur reinstalled the Anatolian beyliks, breaking Ottoman dominance in central Anatolia.

The most instructive fact about the collapse is where it stopped. The period saw complete political and territorial fragmentation, especially in Anatolia, where Timur restored the independent Turkish principalities — while the empire's European provinces proved surprisingly resilient. The Anatolian lands, taken from Turkish Muslim dynasts who had been reduced to vassalage with their houses and followings intact, came apart the moment the pressure lifted. The Balkan lands, taken by conquest and redistributed in revenue assignments to men who held them only from the sultan, did not. A conquest that leaves a defeated equal in place buys a truce that lasts as long as the fear does; a conquest that seats dependants on the ground buys a constituency with something to lose. That distinction will have to be tested properly against the settlement's own registers, but the 1402 fracture line is where it first shows.

The fourth answer: cutting the corps loose from war

What happened next demonstrates that the notables understood the kapıkulu exactly as it was meant.

When the empire was restored under Mehmed I, the Turkish notables — in order to deprive the sultan of the only military force he could use to resist their control — required him to abandon the *kapıkulu*, justifying the demand on the Islamic principle that Muslims could not be held in slavery. A faction of the ruling class disarmed the throne by invoking the sacred law, correctly. The doctrine was not a pretext in the sense of being false; it was a genuine rule of the faith, deployed by the men whom the corps existed to check, at the moment the throne was too weak to refuse. Where a robe is real it constrains the ruler, and here is the constraint operating with complete precision against the ruler's most important instrument.

Murad II rebuilt it, and in rebuilding it solved the birth defect. He built up the Janissaries and played them off against the notables; he distributed most of his conquests to members of the kapıkulu, occasionally as timars but more often as tax farms — *iltizam*s — so that the treasury could obtain the money needed to maintain the Janissary army entirely on a salaried basis; and, in order to man the new force, he developed the *devşirme* system of recruiting the best Christian youths from south-eastern Europe.

Two supplies had to be secured and both were, in the same programme. Money came from selling the right to collect revenue, which produced cash up front — the instrument that would, three centuries later, dissolve the whole settlement, and which is introduced here as a solution. Men came from a levy on the sultan's own Christian

subjects rather than from enemies taken in battle, which cut the corps free of the requirement that the empire keep winning wars in order to have an army. The *devşirme*, a collection of boys of roughly eight to fifteen from the subject Christian population, became the main recruiting base for the Janissaries; and enslaving one's own subjects, including Christians, sat awkwardly with the sacred law.

That awkwardness is not incidental and will need a module of its own. What belongs here is the structural point: the decisive Ottoman military innovation was not a weapon or a formation. It was a change in where soldiers came from, forced by a shortage of the previous source, and the empire's most distinctive institution is the answer to a supply problem.

Who was armed, and who was not

The framework asks who was disarmed at the founding. In the Balkans the answer is startling, and it is the module's hardest fact.

They were not disarmed. They were hired.

The first group of timars in the Balkans had a strong Christian majority — on İnalcık and Quataert's figures, sixty per cent in Serbia and eighty-two per cent in Bosnia in the registers of 1467–69 — and the Christian sipahis gradually disappeared afterwards through dispossession or conversion to Islam. Other registers give lower proportions and the picture varies sharply by province: a 1469 register shows over a quarter of timars assigned to Christians, and a late fifteenth-century register for Vidin shows eighteen per cent. The range is wide and should be reported as a range; what is not in doubt is that a substantial part of the cavalry holding the newly conquered Balkans for the sultan consisted of the local military class that had held it before, still Christian, now holding its revenues from him.

Below the cavalry the same arrangement ran further down. Ömer Barkan's estimate is that of some 832,707 Christian hearths in the Balkans in the early sixteenth century, about 90,000 enjoyed some form of special military status as *martolos*, *voynuk* or *eflak*; and their numbers are not the only point, since in many places Christian auxiliaries were the sole defenders of the fortresses, with only one or two Muslim officers in place, and in certain places Christians made up the majority of Ottoman troops. The martolos served as an internal security force in Rumelia, drawn initially from the local Christian population, given privileged *askerî* status in return for service, and commanded predominantly by Muslims.

The temptation is to read this as tolerance, and it should be refused in both directions. A conqueror with no cash and a thin garrison does not have the option of disarming the men who already garrison the country; the cheapest floor available to

him is to leave them in place, take their oath, register their revenues in his own book, and put a Muslim officer over them. It is a cost decision, and it was reversed exactly as the cost eased — the Christian sipahis do not survive the fifteenth century as a class. But it is also not nothing, and it will not do to call the arrangement a fiction: the men on those registers were armed, exempt, and drawing revenue, which is a materially different position from that of the taxed peasant beside them. Both halves are true and the module holds both.

The wall, at last

The defect of 1317 was still unrepaired a century later. One of the most important deficiencies of the failed Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1422 was the lack of heavy cannon.

The repair came from the money. Rumeli Hisarı, the fortress on the European shore that with Bayezid's older fortress opposite sealed the Bosphorus, was completed on 31 August 1452, and in the same period a Hungarian founder named Orban arrived in Constantinople offering Constantine XI the most highly prized technical skill of the age — the casting of large bronze guns — and, finding the Byzantine court unable to pay, went to Edirne and offered the same skill to Mehmed II. Most of the guns at the siege were in fact cast by Ottoman founders, Saruca among them, with Orban contributing one great bombard. Its dimensions are reported consistently and its shot is not: about twenty-seven feet long with a bore of some thirty inches, capable of roughly seven shots a day at a range of a mile or two, firing a stone ball whose weight the sources give anywhere between about six hundred and fifteen hundred pounds. Two hundred men were sent ahead to level the road and strengthen the bridges, and the gun travelled to the city drawn by sixty oxen with two hundred men marching beside it.

The siege opened on 6 April 1453 and settled into a daily rhythm — the great guns and dozens of smaller bombards hammering the walls through the daylight, the defenders working through the night by torchlight to fill the breaches with earth, timber and barrels of soil. The city fell on 29 May. Fifty-three days.

Nine years to starve out Prusa; fifty-three days to break the strongest fortifications in Europe. Between the two lies everything this module has described, and none of it was foreseen at either end. The difference is not that the Ottomans became more warlike. It is that they had acquired, in stages and by improvisation, the two things a raiding band structurally cannot have: a corps of infantry that belonged to the ruler and could be kept in the field indefinitely, and a treasury capable of buying an instrument that the empire it was pointed at had been offered first and could not afford.

Reading the floor against the framework

The framework treats the founding conquest as an act — the moment organised violence establishes the order — and then moves on to what was built over it. This case will not sit still for that.

The Ottoman floor was laid in at least five distinguishable layers over a hundred and fifty years: Turkmen raiders living on plunder; salaried yaya and müsellem paid by the campaign and settled on tax-exempt farms; timar-holding provincial cavalry commanded by a Turkish notable class; hereditary marcher dynasties on the Rumelian frontier, several of them descended from the conquered aristocracy; and the sultan's slave corps, funded first from the fifth of the spoils and then from tax farms, and manned first from captives and then from the sultan's own subjects' children. **Each layer was laid to repair a specific defect in the layer before it, and no layer replaced its predecessor.** The raiders were demoted to frontier irregulars and kept; the yaya and müsellem were pushed to rear-line duties and kept; the timar cavalry remained the numerical bulk of the army for another two centuries after the Janissaries had become its decisive arm.

The refinement to carry forward is that **a conquest floor is a stratigraphy rather than an event, and the older strata are demoted rather than dismissed** — which means that an order of this kind accumulates, as a direct by-product of solving its military problems, a series of armed constituencies each of which possesses a real claim on the state, a memory of having been essential, and a grievance dating from the day it was superseded. That is not a separate misfortune that later befell the empire. It is the residue of the method. Every one of these layers will be found, in the coordination problem this study will come to, sitting at the table with a legal entitlement and a reason to be aggrieved; and the corps that ends this settlement by artillery in 1826 is the fifth layer defending against a sixth exactly as the third once defended against it.

Two threads run out of this module and are not closed here.

The first is the supply question, which is where the sharpest attention will have to go. The kapıkulu was born dependent on a flow of captives, which is a flow of successful wars; the devshirme converted that dependence into a levy on subjects, which is a flow that does not require winning. That single substitution is the hinge of the classical settlement, and its reversal — the abandonment of the levy, somewhere in the seventeenth century — is the hinge of the settlement's end. Everything about how the corps was recruited, formed and severed follows from it, and none of it makes sense read as doctrine rather than as supply.

The second confirms and sharpens what the eve of the conquest already suggested. The Byzantine state was not short of obedience; it was short of soldiers it could pay for,

and the gun that ended it was offered to its emperor first. The Ottoman state's entire military history in this module is a sequence of answers to the same question — where do the men come from and what do we pay them with — asked by rulers whose legitimacy was never seriously in doubt among the people they were taxing. **Belief makes obedience cheap; it does not make soldiers cheap.** The order that solved the second problem took the city from the order that had only solved the first.

A note on sources. The narrative spine of the military reorganisations — nomad cavalry and the *mukâṭa'a*, the yaya and müsellem, the conversion of salaries into timars, the rise of the Turkish notable class through command of the regular army, the kapıkulu founded on the reinterpreted fifth, the demand that Mehmed I abandon it, and Murad II's rebuilding of it on tax farms and the *devşirme* — follows Malcolm Yapp's account in the Encyclopædia Britannica, paraphrased throughout and quoted nowhere at length; it is a synthesis of the standard scholarship and should be read as one authority's ordering of a contested field rather than as settled fact. Where it conflicts with other work the conflict is reported: Yapp's claim that the yaya and müsellem were mostly Balkan Christians is set against Turkish scholarship describing them as Turcoman peasants, and the chronology is noted as favouring the latter for the corps's origin. The detail of one *akçe* a day paid only during a campaign, with exemption from extraordinary taxes in lieu for the rest of the year, is from the Turkish Religious Foundation's encyclopaedia entry on the corps. The pençik and its attribution to Kara Rüstem and Çandarlı Kara Halil follow a doctoral study of the kapıkulu and the Turkish scholarly literature it cites; the founding date of the Janissary corps is given as uncertain and reported in the range 1363–1365 that those sources offer. Figures on Christian timar-holders are given as a range because the registers disagree by province and by year: sixty per cent in Serbia and eighty-two per cent in Bosnia for 1467–69 on İnalcık and Quataert's figures, against over a quarter in a 1469 register studied by Hatice Oruç and eighteen per cent at Vidin in a late fifteenth-century register studied by Rossitsa Gradeva. Barkan's estimate of roughly 90,000 privileged military hearths among some 832,707 Christian hearths in the early sixteenth-century Balkans is quoted as the Edinburgh history reports it, and, like all Ottoman demographic estimates derived from the *tahrir* registers, it should be treated as an order of magnitude and not a count. Dates are given as the record gives them and their disputes are shown rather than resolved: Bapheus on 27 July 1302, which İnalcık would place in 1301; the siege of Prusa dated from 1317 with the fall on 6 April 1326, the length of the siege given in the sources as six or nine years; Ankara on 20 July 1402; the fall of Constantinople between 6 April and 29 May 1453. The conquest of Adrianople has been left out of the narrative rather than dated, because the sources

genuinely do not agree — İnalcık argues for 1361 on the strength of a Venetian dispatch and the fiscal record, while most recent scholarship has moved to 1369 on the basis of Byzantine short chronicles and a metropolitan's poem showing the city still in imperial hands at Christmas 1366 — and no argument here depends on it. Orban's bombard is described from the several accounts that agree on its length and bore and disagree on its shot, whose reported weight runs from about six hundred to about fifteen hundred pounds; the range is given rather than a figure. Osman's dream is treated as what the scholarship treats it as — a myth first attested in the chronicle tradition of the later fifteenth century, with no contemporary corroboration — and Caroline Finkel's characterisation of its function is paraphrased and credited. No fourteenth-century Ottoman narrative source survives, and every statement in this module about the intentions of Osman, Orhan or Murad I rests on writers working a century or more later with a dynasty to justify.

THEY WERE NOT VALID

Module 2 · the settlement — who got what and on what terms; how an empire bought a cavalry army of eighty thousand men without paying wages; and why the man who ploughed the ground held a better title than the man who took its tithe

What the surveyors found

The instrument of the Ottoman settlement was not a sword or a charter. It was a book, and the book was compiled by men walking through villages counting things.

What they found was not empty ground and not a novelty. The peasant household had been the basic form of agrarian production across most of the land the Ottomans came to rule since Roman times, and had continued so under Byzantine rule; the *çift-hane* system was built on realities already present in the conquered countryside — a class of free peasants cultivating their own land — and its taxation combined Byzantine, Ottoman and Islamic rules. Its basic unit was a married peasant male holding as much arable land as a yoked pair of oxen could work: the family's labour capacity, *hane*, joined to the capacity of the pair, *çift*.

That is the answer to the framework's first question about any settlement — what was there before, and was it a thing or a relation between persons. It was a relation: a household, a pair of oxen, a customary due, and a lord of some description at the other end of it, whether a Byzantine *pronoiar*, a Serbian fief-holder or a monastery. The Ottomans did not abolish it. They wrote it down.

The writing down is the *tahrir*, and its mechanics matter because they are the settlement. Surveyors established what each locality yielded and in what proportions, and the results were entered in a register which was sent to Istanbul for the sultan's examination, approval and seal; the sealed register was then copied, the copy retained for reference at the imperial registry, the Defterhane, and the sealed original returned to the province — this being the *mufassal*, the detailed register — after which further registers were drawn up by the same process, the first of them the *icmal* or summary, in which the revenue assignments and the men who held them were recorded. İnalcık's judgement on what these are is worth keeping: an Ottoman survey is not a cadastre in the modern sense, but a system of registering land and population comparable to Domesday, functional and practical, which made a systematic cadastral registration unnecessary — an impossible task in any case under medieval conditions — and whose

real object was the registration of every potential source of revenue, while doubling as a general inspection.

Two further facts about the register carry the module. The division between the detailed and the summary register corresponded to the fundamental division of Ottoman society between *askerî* and *reaya* — that is, the state's picture of its own social order was physically bound in two separate volumes, taxpayers in one and exemption-holders in the other. And the provincial law codes were written into the surveys themselves: the first centrally written Ottoman law book appeared as a preface to a land and tax survey of 1487, and the first official compilation of *kanun* was made under Bayezid II in 1499. The law of a province arrived attached to the count of its villages, and much of what it codified was what the surveyors had found there.

The surveys were carried out for taxation, not for demography, and their registration was of adult males — chiefly household heads as taxpayers, but also bachelors and others; and after 1715 the regular practice of compiling them collapsed. Hold that last date. It is the fuse.

The fiction: no one who works the land owns it

Over the found order the Ottomans laid a legal claim of a very particular shape, and it is the primary fiction of this settlement.

Classical Ottoman land legislation distinguished fundamentally between the right to cultivate, *tasarruf*, and absolute ownership, *raqaba*. The two main categories were *mülk* and *miri*. The holder of mülk combined cultivation with absolute ownership, and mülk was largely confined to orchards adjacent to villages and formed a small proportion of the land. Miri land was owned by the state; the actual cultivators were essentially its tenants, though entitled to pass the right of cultivation to their heirs; and miri consisted of the arable on which crops were sown and constituted the vast majority of agricultural land in the empire.

The consequence runs all the way up. The sipahis did not hold the ownership of the land: they could not sell it, could not endow it, and could not leave it to their heirs, the timars being granted for a limited time in return for a post. Nor did holders of mülk or *vakıf* own the land — all types of mülk and vakıf in the empire in effect concerned only the proprietary right to revenues, that is to agricultural surplus in the form of tax or rent, and not the land itself; and having inalienable sovereign rights over the *reaya*, in İnalcık's formulation, the state claimed the peasants' surplus as tax or rent, collecting it directly through the treasury or assigning it to grant-holders within the timar system.

The framework's three settlement fictions do not fit this. *Vacancy* declares occupied land empty, and its job is dispossession; the Ottomans dispossessed nobody of

cultivation and would have wrecked their own revenue by doing so. *Recognition* declares that the grantee already owned what he is being given, and its job is binding an elite by making a gift feel like a confirmation; the Ottoman grant does the reverse, telling a man plainly that what he holds is not his. *Divisibility* declares a collective holding partible, and its job is manufacturing a market; the Ottoman instrument was designed to prevent a market in exactly this asset.

What the kanun performs is a fourth operation, and it should be named: **eminent domain** — declare that the sovereign holds the bare ownership of everything, and that every person in possession, from the ploughman to the vizier, holds a conditional right derived from him. Its job is neither dispossession nor gift nor market. **Its job is to make every holding revocable.**

Set that beside what the modern colonial statute does and the pair becomes legible. A conqueror answering to a metropole that believes in law converts a relation between persons into a transferable thing, so that land which was office or lineage right becomes an estate that can be granted, sold and mortgaged. The Ottoman kanun runs the identical machinery backwards: it converts things — the Byzantine estate, the Serbian patrimony, the monastic property, the Anatolian freehold — into relations, revenue claims held during pleasure from a sovereign who can void them. Same instrument, opposite direction. **The direction is set by what the conqueror needs.** A conqueror who needs a market makes things out of relations. A conqueror who needs an army makes relations out of things, because a relation can be taken back and a thing cannot.

The Ottomans needed an army.

Thirty-seven thousand livings

The division of the conquered revenue was graded, and the grades were arithmetical rather than aristocratic. Lands yielding above 100,000 *akçe* a year were *hass*, and went to sultans, princes, viziers and provincial governors-general; those yielding from 20,000 to 99,999 were *zeamet*, whose holders were called *zaim*; and grants below 20,000 akçe were timars, held by the timariot in compensation for military service. Most holders were at the bottom of that scale: in the 1530s forty per cent of timariots drew less than 3,000 akçe a year.

The scale of the whole is known from the surveys of Süleyman's early reign and the budget of 1527–28. They show the number of timars reaching 37,000, with the timar-holders disposing of roughly forty per cent of the land-based taxes, and — with the armed retainers the campaigning holders brought with them — producing a timariot cavalry army of seventy to eighty thousand men, the main element of Ottoman military strength.

Forty per cent of the empire's land tax never entered a treasury. It was consumed at source by the men who collected it, in exchange for turning up mounted and bringing others. That is not a fiscal system with an army attached. It is an army with a fiscal system attached, and every feature of the settlement follows from reading it that way.

The consideration, and why it did not blow up

The framework's sharpest question about any settlement is what the grantee owed in return, and specifically whether the consideration included armed service — because a grant purchasing armed service leaves a rival with a retinue, which is the medieval European bargain and the reason the political history of that settlement is a history of baronial revolt.

The Ottoman grant purchased armed service, explicitly, on a published sliding scale. Under the law as the Ottoman legal tradition records it, a man with a timar of 1,000 akçe served as his own armed retainer; at 2,000 he brought himself and a *gulâm*; at 4,000 to 5,000, his own mail and one *cebelü*; up to 9,000, two cebelü; at 9,000 to 11,000, three; at 12,000, four; at 15,000, five; and above 15,000, one further cebelü for each additional 3,000 akçe. A simple sipahi owed one cebelü for every additional 3,000 akçe of his timar, while officers holding above 20,000 — the *subaşı* and higher ranks — brought one for every 5,000. By the Conqueror's law the cebelü carried lance, sword, bow, arrows and shield and served as cavalry.

Nobody was exempt from the arithmetic, including the sultan's own household. Gülbahar Hatun, consort of Mehmed II and mother of Bayezid II, was expected to provide cebelü in return for the lands granted her around Amasya, and in this the archival record shows her treated no differently from an ordinary subject.

By the Field Manual's expectation this arrangement should have produced the European failure mode within a century: an armed provincial class holding land and retinues, bargaining with the throne, and eventually replacing it. It did not, for two centuries, and the reason is not that the Ottomans were better at obedience. It is that the retinue was attached to a revenue and the revenue was attached to a line in a register that a clerk in Istanbul could strike out. The sipahi could not sell, endow or bequeath. He was bound as a matter of basic rule to remain in the district where he began, and changes to his timar had to be made within that district, transfer from one district to another being exceptional. A man in that position may command thirty horsemen and still be unable to threaten anyone, because the moment he is struck off he has neither pay nor post nor land to retire to, and the thirty horsemen are attached to the revenue and not to him.

So the consideration is diagnostic only in combination with the tenure. A grant buying armed service is dangerous where the grant is secure and safe where it is revocable, and the framework's variable needs that second term. Europe granted land in perpetuity for military service and got civil war; the Ottomans granted revocable revenue for military service and got, on the eve of the sixteenth century's great campaigns, seventeen thousand cebelü from the Anatolian province and thirty-three thousand from Rumelia, so that the state obtained a substantial body of soldiers at almost no expense to itself.

That clause is the whole settlement in eleven words, and it is the direct continuation of the empire's founding problem. An order that could not pay wages for infantry solved its cavalry problem by never paying wages at all — by handing out, instead of money, the right to take money, on terms that could be withdrawn.

The name in the book

Who was inside the settlement and who outside, and what marked the line?

Not blood, and — at the founding — not creed. The most visible division in Ottoman society ran between the political-military *askerî* class, representing the sultan's authority, and the tax-paying *reaya*; and the askerî comprised soldiers, administrators, religious scholars, and anyone granted a tax exemption by the sultan in return for a specified service. The marker is in that last clause. It is not a lineage, a manumission or a landholding. It is a grant of exemption, evidenced by a patent — a *berat* — issued by the sultan and recorded in the register. **A name in a book, entered in exchange for a service, and removable by the same hand that entered it.**

This produces a boundary of a kind the collection has not yet catalogued. The Qing kept office open and caste closed by descent. The Ottoman line was drawn by neither descent nor creed but by enrolment, and it ran in both directions: a peasant who performed a service could be raised into the exempt class, and a member of the exempt class who ceased to serve could be entered back among the taxpayers and made to pay the land taxes like anyone else. That the Balkan conquest was garrisoned in large part by Christian cavalry holding revenue assignments from the sultan follows directly: the criterion was service, and Christians could render it.

The line hardened afterwards, and this study will have to date the hardening. But at the founding the Ottoman settlement's inside/outside marker was administrative rather than ascriptive, which is precisely what one expects of a conquest still unfinished enough to need everyone it can get.

The peasant's better title

Here the case delivers its most counterintuitive fact, and the framework should be made to absorb it rather than have it smoothed away.

The cultivator's holding was more secure than his lord's.

The *tapu* was a permanent lease of state arable to a peasant family, and the word also denoted the title deed certifying the right; the head of the family acquired the usufruct and could transmit it to his male descendants at his death, pledging in return to cultivate continuously and to meet a series of fiscal obligations and specified services to the state or to the sipahi. The right was enforceable in court, unlike its English villein equivalent: tapulu land was acquired by contract registered in court and certified by a kadı as in accordance with the sharia; title was gained by a tax payment and three years of cultivation, after which the peasant had security of tenure; sultanic law recognised that long undisputed possession constituted legal possession; and possession secured inheritance, the *çift* passing without payment of an entry fine. The comparison the same study draws is arresting and is offered here as its author's, not as this study's own: the rights accorded to the lowest rank of Ottoman cultivator corresponded to those eventually granted to the highest rank of English tenant, the fee simple holder.

The usufruct could not be sold but could be transferred by *feraǧ*; a peasant could build on miri land with the permission of the *sahib-i arz*, and the buildings — houses, barns — were then his private property, as were trees, gardens and vines.

Against this stands the other half, and it must be given equal weight. Leaving the land uncultivated was punished by its removal from the peasant's hands; those who abandoned cultivated land were either caught and returned to it or compelled to pay a heavy charge called the *çift bozan resmi*, the farm-breaker's due. The two instruments — forced residence and the farm-breaker's tax — appear in the law codes from the time of Mehmed II and remained legally in force until the Land Code of 1858.

Both halves are true and the module holds both. The bargain is exact: the cultivator was given a heritable, registered, court-enforceable right in the ground, and the door out of the village was legislated shut. That is the framework's exit variable answered directly, and it is answered by statute rather than by geography. The Ottoman peasant did not stay because he could not physically leave — the empire was enormous and porous — but because the law made leaving expensive and made staying, by the standards of the countryside on either side of him, tolerable.

The larger shape is what matters for everything downstream. **In this settlement, security of tenure ran opposite to rank.** The peasant's holding was heritable and defensible at law. The sipahi's was neither heritable nor saleable and could be reassigned. The vizier's was neither, and his person and his estate stood at the sultan's

disposal besides. The higher a man rose, the less he owned — the exact inverse of every European settlement in this collection, and a coherent answer to the problem the framework calls the open one. **A state that wants an army and not a nobility gives property to the men who cannot fight and claims to the men who can.**

The limit of the fiction

A doctrine of universal revocability invites an obvious question: how far could it actually be pushed? The answer is dated, and it is the reason this module carries the title it does.

In the last years of his reign Mehmed II moved against the exceptions. The reform bore heavily on the mülk and vakıf holdings that had originally been created out of state lands by the revenue grants of previous sultans, and its principal architect was Karamani Mehmed Pasha, first as chancellor and then as grand vizier. A contemporary Ottoman complaint, preserved in the tradition and translated in the modern scholarship, records the exchange: he had abolished all the vakıfs and mülks established in Ottoman lands according to the sharia of Muhammad and seized their revenues for the sultan's treasury; asked how he could abolish endowments made in accordance with the sharia, he answered "they were not valid, [so they are now] abolished"; and — the complainant notes with satisfaction — when he died he was buried without his head.

That is the fiction stated by the man operating it, in four words, to a scholar's face. It is also the fiction meeting its ceiling, twice over.

The first limit was technical, and the modern correction is important because it is the sort of thing a study can easily get wrong. The freeholds that were the reform's target were revenue-holdings and not land-holdings; examination of a tax register for the Anatolian province of Amasya shows that the reform brought no fundamental change to the existing revenue-holding system, still less to land relations, which lay entirely outside its scope; many former holders simply continued in control as timariots, their revenue status altered rather than their possession; and the whole may fairly be described, at least in north-central Anatolia, as a somewhat superficial fiscal reform which ended in failure. The sovereign could re-label a revenue. He could not, and did not attempt to, rearrange who ploughed what.

The second limit was political and arrived within months. On Bayezid II's accession in 1481 most of the former mülk and vakıf holdings were restored to their previous owners. Bayezid restored the confiscated endowments, drew closer to the ulema, and grounded his authority more firmly in Islamic norms — the scholars having protested the seizure of vakıf property, while the Janissaries, as salaried men, had their own grievance in the currency debasements by which Mehmed had financed his wars.

Read as position rather than as morality, this is the clearest single demonstration in the case of where the settlement's power actually stopped. The sultan's legal claim to the bare ownership of the empire was genuine, was operable, and was used. What it could not survive was the combination of the men who authoritatively read the sacred law telling him he was wrong and the men who were paid to protect him agreeing. The doctrine of universal revocability was, in the end, revocable itself, and the two constituencies that revoked it are the two this study will have to watch for the next three hundred years.

Reading the settlement against the framework

The framework asks a study to classify the settlement's fiction against three families, and this case does not fit any of them, which is a contribution rather than an embarrassment.

A fourth family belongs on the card: *eminent domain*. Declare that the sovereign holds the bare ownership of everything and that every possessor holds a conditional right derived from him. Its job is not dispossession, not the binding of an elite by gift, and not the manufacture of a market. **Its job is to make every holding revocable**, and the conqueror who reaches for it is one who needs to be able to take back what he has given. Expect to find it where an apex is buying military service with revenue rather than with cash, where it has no metropolitan audience whose law it must satisfy, and where the danger it fears is not native resistance but the calcification of its own servants into a hereditary class.

Underneath the four families sits a rule that this case makes visible because it runs the machinery in the unfamiliar direction. **A settlement instrument converts, and the direction of the conversion is set by what the conqueror needs.** A conqueror who needs a market converts relations between persons into transferable things — the Algerian *sénatus-consulte*, the Kenyan ordinance, the manufactured willing seller. A conqueror who needs an army converts things into relations — the Ottoman kanun, which took a Byzantine estate, a Serbian patrimony and an Anatolian freehold and reissued them as claims held during pleasure. The colonial statute and the sultanic law code are one instrument pointed opposite ways, and a corpus that had only ever seen the first would have mistaken the direction for the mechanism.

Two findings compound rather than stand alone.

The framework's rule that the *consideration* is the diagnostic variable in a co-optation needs a second term. The Ottoman grant bought armed service — the clause the modern colonial grant deletes precisely because it installs a permanent civil-war risk — and did not produce the European outcome, because the grant was revocable, non-

heritable, unsaleable and tied to a district. **A grant buying armed service is dangerous only where the grant is secure.** Where it is revocable and enumerated, a ruler may safely buy retinues, because a retinue attached to a withdrawable revenue disperses when the revenue is withdrawn.

And the spine of this study runs straight through the module. The founding problem was where soldiers come from and what to pay them with; the settlement answers the second half by never paying at all — thirty-seven thousand livings, forty per cent of the land tax consumed at source, seventy to eighty thousand horsemen, at almost no expense to the treasury. But the answer has a hidden dependency that is easy to miss while it is working. **The power to revoke rests entirely on the power to enumerate.** A revenue can only be struck out if it has been written down, and the writing down is the survey. The surveys were periodic, laborious and carried out by men on foot; and after 1715 the regular practice of compiling them collapsed. When the register stops being remade, the entries in it stop being reviewable, and a claim that is never reviewed becomes, without any legislation whatever, a possession. That is how a settlement engineered at every level to be revocable turned hereditary from below with nobody deciding it — and the mechanism is not corruption or decline but the quiet lapse of an administrative practice on which everything else silently depended.

A note on sources. The one exact quotation carrying weight here is Karamani Mehmed Pasha's reply, given in a contemporary Ottoman complaint and quoted in Oktay Özel's article on Mehmed II's land reform; it is a modern translator's English for an Ottoman text, is reproduced at the length the argument needs and no further, and is used because the four words at its centre are the fiction stated by its operator. The dating and content of the reform follow the same article, whose two corrections are adopted in full: that the target was revenue-holdings and not land-holdings, and that the register evidence from Amasya shows no fundamental change to land relations; the restoration of most freeholds under Bayezid II in 1481 is from the same source, and Karamani Mehmed Pasha's death in the disturbances following Mehmed II's death is reported as the complainant reports it. The legal architecture — the distinction between *raqaba* and *tasarruf*, the categories of *miri*, *mülk* and *vakıf*, the confinement of mülk largely to orchards near villages, and the finding that mülk and vakıf holders held revenues rather than land — follows the standard reference literature and İnalcık as quoted in it. The mechanics of the *tahrir*, the mufassal and icmal registers, the sealing at Istanbul and the retention of copies at the Defterhane, and İnalcık's judgement that an Ottoman survey is not a cadastre in the modern sense, are drawn from the Turkish scholarly literature on the registers and quoted only in short compass. Figures are given as their sources give them and none has been sharpened:

37,000 timars and roughly forty per cent of land-based taxes in the hands of their holders, with a resulting cavalry force of 70,000–80,000, from the Turkish Religious Foundation's encyclopaedia entry on the Defterhane, resting on the tahrirs of Süleyman's early reign and the budget of 1527–28; forty per cent of timariots below 3,000 akçe in the 1530s, from Faroqhi and Fleet; 17,000 cebelü from Anatolia and 33,000 from Rumelia towards the end of the sixteenth century, from the same encyclopaedia's entry on the cebelü, which also supplies the graduated scale of obligation and notes that some registers of Mehmed II's reign record figures departing from the general rule. All Ottoman quantities derived from the registers should be read as orders of magnitude; Heath Lowry's critique of the pitfalls of building demographic and social history on these records applies to every number in this module. The revenue thresholds separating timar, zeamet and hass are given in the conventional form found across the reference literature, and readers should know that the boundaries are administrative conventions that varied. The peasant's tenure is described from the specialist literature on Ottoman land law, and the comparison between the Ottoman cultivator's rights and those of the English fee simple holder is Deborah Boucoyannis's argument, credited to her and not adopted as this study's own finding. The *çift bozan resmi* and forced residence, their presence in the codes from Mehmed II's time and their survival in law until 1858, follow the Turkish scholarship on the tax. The collapse of the regular survey practice after 1715 is reported as the reference literature reports it, and the inference drawn from it in the closing section is this study's, offered as a hypothesis for the later modules to test rather than as an established finding.

BOTH REBELS AND UNBELIEVERS

Module 3 · the robe — the coats the dynasty wore and the audiences each was cut for; and the position of the men who cut them, who drew the sultan's salary, could be dismissed by him at will, and were the only branch of his ruling class whose houses and sons he could not take

What the sultan was, and to whom

An Ottoman sultan of the sixteenth century was several things at once, and the multiplicity is not confusion. Each claim was addressed to a different set of people whose recognition mattered for a different reason, and reading them as a single ideology flattens the only interesting question, which is who each was for.

He was *gazi*, warrior for the faith, which was the frontier's own idiom and the dynasty's oldest coat. That claim was for the men who did the fighting and for the wider Muslim world watching a border move; it was not, as the older scholarship supposed, uniquely Ottoman, since other Anatolian rulers used the ghazi title and even the sixteenth-century Safavids claimed it. He was sultan, padişah and khan, which is the language of sovereign kingship in the Turco-Persian tradition and was addressed to rival monarchs and to his own coordinating class. After 1517 he was Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, having taken Mecca and Medina with Egypt — and that title, too, was inherited rather than minted: "servant of the two sacred cities" was a title the Abbasids and the Mamluks had already used.

And he was, at some point and by some route, caliph. This is the claim most confidently repeated and least supported, and getting it right matters because a study that accepts the standard story will misdate the whole robe.

The standard story is that when Selim I took Cairo in 1517 the last Abbasid caliph formally surrendered the office and its emblems to him. Stories of an official transfer of the caliphal office from the Cairene Abbasids to the Ottomans were a later invention, and it was by the eighteenth century that Selim's conquest had come to be romanticised as the moment the Ottomans seized leadership of the Muslim world. The transfer is reported by later tradition, not by the event. The suggestion that the transfer story was no more than a fiction concocted to justify a renewed Ottoman interest in the caliphal title is Hugh Kennedy's, and the fiction became diplomatically useful after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774.

What the record does show, in place of a ceremony, is a piece of legal work. In 1544 the grand vizier Lütfi Pasha — Selim's son-in-law and Süleyman's brother-in-law — wrote a treatise in Arabic, *Khalas al-umma fi ma'rifat al-a'imma*, addressing the prophetic tradition that the caliph must be of Quraysh descent, and argued that no rule could be deduced from it barring men of non-Qurayshi descent from the caliphate for ever; even if the tradition were sound, he reasoned, it had been binding only in the earliest days of Islam. The obstacle to the claim was a hadith. A statesman wrote a book removing it. That is what tailoring a robe actually looks like when the record is good enough to show it.

Then note when the claim became load-bearing. The scholarly line running from Barthold holds that the emphasis on the Ottoman caliphate developed at the end of the eighteenth century, in the context of the Russian relationship; and by the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774 the Ottoman state secured a right of religious guardianship in a place where it no longer held political authority, precisely because it held the caliphate — the treaty's third article recognising the Muslims of the Crimea as free and independent while acknowledging that, as caliph of the Muslims and leader of the believers, the sultan would regulate their religious affairs.

That is the framework's revealed-preference test producing an unusually clean result. An apex holding uncontested force does not pay for legitimacy it does not need. Selim in 1517, having just destroyed the Mamluk sultanate and taken the holy cities, needed no doctrine of universal Muslim headship and did not systematically press one. Abdülhamid I in 1774, ceding a Muslim province to a Christian empress, needed exactly such a doctrine, and pressed it into a treaty article. **The spiritual claim over people one no longer governs is the tell of a floor that has retracted.** Reach for the robe where the sword no longer reaches.

The men who made the law fit

Beneath the titulature sits the harder problem, and it is the one that occupies this module. An Ottoman sultan legislated. He issued *kanun* — sultanic law, on land tenure, taxation and criminal penalty — over a population whose sacred law was supposed to be sufficient. A body of divine law and a sultan making rules beside it is a contradiction that has to be managed continuously, and the men who managed it were the *ulema*, and the ulema were on the payroll.

The central figure is Ebussuud Efendi. Appointed şeyhülislam in October 1545 by Süleyman, he held the office until his death nearly thirty years later, sole occupant through the last twenty-one years of Süleyman's forty-six-year reign; he restructured the issuing of fetvas by establishing a *fetva eminliği* to ensure consistency and state

oversight; his rulings leaned on *maslaha*, public welfare, as the sharia-derived rationale for kanun, so that sultanic authority should not contravene divine law; and in land law his fetvas established a sharia-compliant framework for the timar system, holding the state's *miri* lands subject to a right of use rather than to full private ownership.

The mechanism by which his opinions became operative is the seam in a single procedure, and it should be stated exactly. Ebussuud's fetvas divide into two kinds: those binding on every judge in the country, and those he gave as a mufti answering religious questions. The first kind were presented to the sultan under the name *fetvâ-yı şerîfe* and confirmed by him, after which — on the principle that where the head of state selects one of the disputed juristic positions, business proceeds on that one — they bound every kadı in the empire. To this class belong the fetvas that formed the nucleus of the new kanun, and those recorded as the preamble to the law code of Buda, which regulate the basis of state land.

Read that as a procedure rather than as a doctrine. God's law is indeterminate at the points where it matters; jurists disagree; the sultan selects among the disagreements; and the selection, once confirmed, is binding on every court in the empire. Nobody has been coerced and nothing has been falsified. The interpretation of the sacred remains genuinely the jurists' work, and the choice among interpretations is the ruler's. That is not a trick played on believers. It is the structure of a settlement in which the trusted-information position is occupied by men the ruler employs, and it is what makes it possible for a fiscal system in which the sultan owns the arable land of the empire to be, at the same time, a system in accordance with the sharia.

The fetva that made an enemy into an unbeliever

The sharpest surviving demonstration of what an employed jurist could be asked to supply is a fetva of Ebussuud's on the Kızılbaş, the Turcoman adherents of the Safavid house, issued in late Safar 955 — the spring of 1548 — as Süleyman prepared his campaign against Shah Tahmasp and Elkas Mirza, and given, the heading states, at the request of those making it.

The exchange is short and its structure is the whole point. The first question asks whether killing the Kızılbaş is lawful under the sharia, and whether those of the army of Islam who kill them become ghazis and those killed by them martyrs. The answer: they do — "it is the greatest holy war and the most glorious martyrdom."

The second question is the one to read twice. Supposing their killing lawful, is this solely because they act out of wickedness and enmity toward the Sultan of the believers and draw their swords against the soldier of Islam, or is there some other reason? The answer: "they are both wicked and, for many reasons, unbelievers" — in the original,

hem bağylerdir ve hem vücūh-ı kešireden kāfirlerdir, they are both rebels and, on many grounds, unbelievers.

The questioner is checking whether the ruling rests on rebellion alone. If it did, the matter would be political: subjects in arms against their sovereign, a category with its own and much narrower legal consequences. The jurist supplies the second ground, and the second ground changes what the campaign is. It also changes who may be killed, because rebellion is an act and unbelief is a condition: Ebussuud's rulings labelled the Kızılbaş heretics whether they lived on Iranian or on Ottoman soil, and held that killing them was praiseworthy rather than merely permitted. The sultan's own Anatolian subjects were inside the ruling.

The same jurist's opinions legitimised Süleyman's killings of Yazidis and, under his successor, the attack on Cyprus — the latter requiring a legal route around a subsisting truce with Venice.

The framework forbids reading this as cynicism, and the prohibition is worth honouring rather than gestured at. Whether Ebussuud believed what he wrote is not recoverable and, held honestly, not decisive; a man formed from boyhood in the Hanafi tradition, who spent thirty years at the head of it, may well have thought the Kızılbaş genuinely outside the faith, and many jurists with no Ottoman salary thought so too. What can be recovered is the position. He was asked by a state that wanted a campaign; he answered in the direction the state wanted; the answer was confirmed and became binding; and he remained in office for thirty years, which no şeyhülislam who habitually answered the other way ever did. The deviation test is available at the apex and returns nothing here, because there was no deviation to read. That absence is itself the finding.

What the ulema valued, and what it could cost them

To read the ulema's behaviour, the framework requires two reconstructions before any judgement: what these men counted as benefit, established from their formation rather than inferred backwards from what they did; and what could credibly be made to fall on them if they refused.

Their formation was in institutions the state built, and by the sixteenth century their entry to office ran through a channel the state had designed. In 1537 Süleyman ordered Ebussuud, then kazasker of Rumelia, to register distinguished students regularly as candidates for ilmiye office; the candidates were called *mülazim* and the condition *mülazemet*, and the system was significant in controlling the quality and the quantity of the ulema by unifying the path into the hierarchy. Graduates holding an *icazet* entered a regular examination, the *rüus*, after the mülazemet period; those who

passed were admitted to ilmiye office, and new certificates were issued as they rose. The ilmiye stood alongside the military *seyfiye* and the bureaucratic *kalemiye* as one of the three branches of the administrative system, and held the offices of şeyhülislam, judge, provincial mufti, chief justice and professor.

So the benefit column was filled early and filled by the state: a career, a salary, a rank in a graded hierarchy, and the standing of a man who knows the law in a society that takes the law seriously. To that must be added the thing that made this class different from every other part of the Ottoman ruling order, and it is the finding this module turns on.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the high-ranking judges and professors — the *mevali*, singular *mevla*, lord — came to constitute a privileged social group, a nobility of sorts, whose members could pass their social status to their sons; their legitimating and legal-administrative functions gave them real leverage against the administrative apparatus and secured them privileges, and the rules governing ulema careers produced a quite exclusive group at the summit of the hierarchy, whose exclusivity is demonstrable for the period 1550–1650. Inheritance of the ilmiye occupation from father to son and grandson became customary; with the privileges the Ottomans provided, such families developed a distinct identity and, through intermarriage, an ilmiye network and an aristocratic class.

One family carries the point without commentary. Hocazade Esad Efendi, şeyhülislam from 1615 to 1622 and again from 1623 to 1625, was the son of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, who had held the office before him; he was married to the daughter of Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi, who had been chief mufti under Murad III and Mehmed III; his son Ebusaid Mehmed Efendi also served as şeyhülislam; and his daughter Akile Hatun married Sultan Osman II in March 1622. Hoca Sadeddin's other sons, Abdülaziz and Salih, became kazaskers, and among his grandsons Ebusaid Mehmed and Bahaî Mehmed, and Ebusaid's son Feyzullah, continued the line.

It was noticed at the time and it was resented. Esad Efendi passed abruptly from the medrese to the judgeship of Edirne and then to that of Istanbul, at twenty-five; with such appointments the real scholars were left in the background, and it became the children of şeyhülislams, chief justices and imperial tutors who reached the good posts.

Now the cost column, and it is precisely graduated. Against an alim the sultan's ordinary instrument was dismissal, which was frequent and carried no further penalty; a dismissed şeyhülislam retired on a pension and his family kept its standing. Exile was available. Execution was not routine and its rarity is the measure of the class's protection: in the whole history of the empire three şeyhülislams were killed by a sultan's order, the first being Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi in 1634 under Murad IV; Islamic

law recognised the head of state's authority to impose death, and the Ottoman sultans, relying on their customary prerogative, used it freely and usually with a fetva from the ulema — and the clear ground of such a political execution was an attempt to depose the sultan or to question his legitimacy, which is precisely what the executed şeyhülislams had attempted. Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi had protested at a judge's execution and had secretly organised meetings against the sultan, who already suspected him of connections with plotters; this was the first execution of a şeyhülislam in Ottoman history. He was first sentenced to exile in Cyprus, then turned back on the road and strangled on a beach.

Set the two columns beside each other and the class's conduct across three centuries becomes entirely legible without any appeal to piety or venality. Disagreement cost a post. Conspiracy cost a life. Property and sons were safe from both. A man in that position will argue with the sultan, will decline particular requests, will occasionally refuse — because the price of refusal is a career interruption in a family that will survive it — and will not lead a coup, because that is the one act for which the price is his neck. And he will supply, as a matter of routine, the confirmations the state asks for, because supplying them is what the position is for and what it pays.

Whether the veto was real

That leaves the question the collection has been carrying since the Umayyad case, where the rulers did not employ the men who could authoritatively read their doctrine and were destroyed partly by them. The Ottomans employed theirs and gave them, in the received account, a veto: a fetva was required to depose a sultan. Is that a leash held loosely by a servant, or a servant holding the leash?

The record answers it, and the answer is neither. Take the four occasions where the instrument was tested.

In 1481 the doctrine of universal sultanic revocability met its limit when Mehmed II's seizure of pious endowments was reversed on his death: the scholars had protested the confiscations and the salaried corps had its own grievance over the debasements, and the new sultan restored the endowments and drew closer to the ulema. Scholars and soldiers together, and the reversal held.

In 1622 the instrument was used to unmake a sultan, and the sequence is documented. The revolt began on 19 May, driven by resentment at Osman II's taxation and above all by intelligence that he intended, under cover of a pilgrimage, to disband the janissary corps and raise loyal troops in Anatolia, Egypt and Syria; several thousand mutineers first killed the grand vizier and other officials and then advanced on the palace demanding deposition; and the ulema and court factions, initially hesitant,

acquiesced under pressure and legitimised the rebels' action by issuing a fetva. The corps moved first and the fetva followed. And Osman had taken the obvious precaution: two months before his deposition he had married the daughter of Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi, choosing her for her lineage, in an attempt to forge ties with the ulema against the opposition to his reforms — and the family's influence proved insufficient against the military discontent.

In 1656 the instrument was tried from the other end. Şeyhülislam Hocazade Mesud Efendi and a few grand viziers attempted to depose Mehmed IV and replace him with Süleyman, and failed, some of the plotters being executed and others condemned.

In 1634 an alim who moved against a sultan without the corps behind him was strangled on a beach.

The pattern is exact. **The fetva is a licensing instrument, not an initiating one.** It ratifies a coalition that has already formed and it cannot form one. Where the armed corps had decided, the ruling followed and the sultan came down. Where the scholars decided and the corps had not, the scholars were executed. The veto is therefore entirely real in one sense — no deposition in this period was carried through without it, and the ruler who tried to buy the class by marriage understood that he needed it — and entirely unreal in another, since the class never once carried a deposition alone and twice died attempting it.

The collection has been treating an employed clergy as one arrangement. This case shows it is at least two, and the variable that separates them is not employment but **whether the class's property and standing sit inside the ruler's revocability machine.** The Ottoman order made every other holding conditional: the cavalryman's revenue could be struck from a register, the vizier's estate reverted at his death, the slave officer's whole existence was the sultan's property. The ulema alone were free Muslims holding real property, transmitting status to their sons, protected by a sacred law they themselves expounded. **They were employed but not owned, and that is the entire source of the veto.** An interpreter class fully inside the machine — paid, promoted, and dispossessed at the ruler's word — has no veto whatever, whatever the formal doctrine says; an interpreter class outside it altogether, as under the Umayyads, does not have a veto either but a weapon. The Ottoman arrangement is the middle term, and it is the most stable of the three precisely because it makes the interpreters' interest run with the dynasty's survival while leaving them a floor to stand on when they say no.

Reading the robe against the framework

The framework holds that legitimacy is always borrowed from a specific audience's own currency, that an apex may run several robes at once for several audiences, and that

the interpreter position is structural and can only be occupied, crowded or captured. All three hold here without strain. Every Ottoman claim was borrowed: the ghazi idiom from the frontier and from rivals who used it too, the custodianship of the holy cities from the Abbasids and Mamluks who had used the title before, the caliphate from a lineage whose descent requirement had to be argued away in a treatise. Nothing was minted.

Two findings go back to the card.

The first is the module's contribution. **Where an apex employs its interpreters, the veto is a licence rather than a lever, and its existence tells you nothing about the interpreters' independent power.** Test it as this case allows it to be tested: ask whether the class ever exercised the veto without an armed constituency already moving, and what happened to it when it tried. Here the answer is documented, dated and negative — 1622 shows the corps moving first and the ruling following, 1656 and 1634 show what happens to scholars who move first — and the framework's expectation that a formal power to depose indicates a genuine check on the throne should be corrected accordingly. **The second variable the card needs is whether the interpreter class's own property and descent are inside the ruler's revocability machine.** Employed and owned yields no veto at all; unemployed and unowned yields not a veto but a rival; employed and unowned yields exactly this — a class that will refuse individual requests, will ratify what the armed men have already decided, and will never initiate.

The second is the revealed-preference finding on the caliphal claim, and it is offered as a prediction to be tested elsewhere in the corpus rather than as a settled law: **the claim to spiritual authority over people one does not govern appears when the floor retracts, not when it advances.** The Ottoman caliphate was not asserted in 1517 at the moment of maximum force; it was constructed afterwards and became operative in 1774 in a treaty ceding a Muslim province to a Christian empire. An apex that already holds the ground pays for no such doctrine. An apex that has lost the ground and wishes to retain a claim on the people standing on it pays for it immediately.

And one thing compounds directly with what the settlement already showed. That settlement was engineered so that nothing was a thing and everything a claim — a revenue that could be struck out, a post that reverted, an estate that lapsed at death. There was exactly one exception, and it was the ulema, whose property was their own and whose sons could inherit their standing. **Heredity appeared first in the one place where revocability had never been installed**, and the dates are known: the mevali consolidate as a transmissible nobility between roughly 1550 and 1650, well before the cavalry grants harden and well before the slave corps begins enrolling its own children.

This is not a coincidence and it is not decline. It is the settlement's own logic read in the negative — a machine built to prevent an aristocracy produced one exactly where the machine did not reach, and produced it first there.

A note on sources. The exact quotation that carries this module is Ebussuud Efendi's fetva on the Kızılbaş, issued in late Safar 955 (spring 1548) before Süleyman's campaign against Shah Tahmasp and Elkas Mirza; it survives in the Süleymaniye Library manuscript tradition and is quoted here in the transliteration and English of a teaching edition prepared at Boston University, at the length the argument requires and no further, with the operative Ottoman phrase — *hem bağylerdir ve hem vücūh-ı kešireden kāfirlerdir* — given because the distinction it draws between rebellion and unbelief is the whole point. The sixteenth-century original is public-domain material; the English is a modern translator's and is credited as such. Ebussuud's career and the reconciliation of kanun with sharia follow the standard literature, with the classification of his fetvas into those binding on all judges after submission to the sultan and those given as ordinary juristic responses taken from the Turkish Religious Foundation's encyclopaedia entry on his collected fetvas; the specialist work behind this whole section is Colin Imber's study of Ebussuud and the Islamic legal tradition, and Imber's separate essay on Süleyman as caliph and İnalcık's on the Islamisation of Ottoman land law are the arguments this module leans on for the doctrinal accommodation, credited and not quoted. On the caliphate the module follows the revisionist consensus rather than the received story: that the transfer ceremony of 1517 is a later invention is the standard finding, reported here as Caroline Finkel and the reference literature report it, with Hugh Kennedy's characterisation of the transfer story as a concocted fiction credited to him; Barthold's dating of the caliphal emphasis to the late eighteenth century and the third article of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca are taken from the Istanbul history project's account. Lütfi Pasha's treatise of 1544 and its argument against the Quraysh-descent requirement, together with the observation that "servant of the two sacred cities" was already an Abbasid and Mamluk title, are from Hakan Karateke's essay on legitimising the Ottoman sultanate, paraphrased and credited. The mülazemet system and Süleyman's order of 1537 are from the Japanese scholarship on the candidate registers; the account of the mevali as a transmissible nobility in the period 1550–1650 is Baki Tezcan's argument in the *Journal of Islamic Studies*, credited to him and not adopted further than he states it. The Hocazade family connections are given as the reference literature records them and should be treated as a well-documented illustration rather than as a statistical claim about the class. On the executions, the finding that three şeyhülislams were killed by sultanic order, the first in 1634, and that the ground in each case was an attempt at deposition or a challenge to

the sultan's legitimacy, is from the Turkish scholarly article on Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi; the manner of his death is reported as the Turkish accounts report it and rests on the chronicle tradition. The sequence of the revolt of May 1622 — mutineers first, grand vizier killed, palace surrounded, ulema acquiescing under pressure and issuing the fetva afterwards — is the sequence the modern accounts give, and the inference drawn from it in the closing section is this study's own. The failed attempt of 1656 by Şeyhülislam Hocazade Mesud Efendi is reported as the reference literature reports it and would repay checking against the Ottoman chronicles by anyone with the language. Nothing in this module attempts to establish what any of these men believed; the framework forbids it and the sources do not permit it.

THOSE WHO HAVE EXITED

Module 4 · formation — two systems running inside one empire, one open to the ruling faith's own sons and one built for children taken from the conquered; what each installed and at what age; and the population the state tried hardest to form and lost

Three childhoods

Take three boys born in the same year in the middle of the sixteenth century — one in a Muslim quarter of Bursa, one in a Christian village in Bosnia, one in a Turcoman winter camp in the Taurus — and follow what the Ottoman state did to each. The three answers are so different that they cannot be a single formation system, and the differences are not accidents of provision. They are decisions, and each was made for a reason that can be read.

The boy in Bursa went to a *sıbyan mektebi*. These schools, typically attached to mosques and accessible from about the age of three, gave free primary instruction in Quran recitation, Arabic literacy, basic arithmetic and ethical training; they stood in every city, district and village, generally beside the mosque or in a corner of it, in a plain design, and the understanding was explicitly that children of a boisterous and playful age should be sent to the school rather than into the mosque itself. If he was able and his family could spare him, a ladder ran upward from there.

The boy in Bosnia received nothing at all from the Ottoman state and was liable to be taken by it. His formation, if he was left where he was, remained entirely the business of his own church: the parish priest, the monastery, the Orthodox year. The empire built no school for him, taught him no Turkish, and made no attempt to install in him any belief whatever.

The boy in the Taurus was a Muslim of the dynasty's own language and stock, and he was the one the state would spend the most effort trying to change — with results this module ends on.

The Ottoman order did not attempt to form the majority of its subjects. That is a policy and not a failure, and the framework's usual prediction about it needs adjusting before the module can proceed, because on the standard expectation an order that withholds formation from the mass leaves the displaced order holding the field, stays expensive, and pays in force and surveillance. The Ottomans withheld it for four centuries in the Balkans and did not pay that price. The reason is stated most simply as

a question of what they were asking for. They wanted the peasant's tithe, his poll-tax, his presence on the register, and, at intervals, his son. None of those requires his conviction; the first three require only a credible floor and a working court, and the fourth requires that he not be able to resist. **You only need to form the people whose belief you are spending.** The Ottomans spent nobody's belief but their own servants', and their formation apparatus is shaped accordingly: nothing for the mass, a conventional religious ladder for the faith's own sons, and, for a few thousand children taken from the conquered, the most intensive formation in the empire.

The ladder for the faith's own sons

The medrese system was the older of the two and the less remarkable, in the sense that every Islamic polity had one. Its Ottoman version is worth establishing because of where it led rather than what it taught.

Orhan opened the first Ottoman medrese at İznik in 1331. After 1453 the centre of instruction moved to Istanbul from Edirne; Mehmed II converted the monastery of Christ Pantocrator into a medrese and opened another in Hagia Sophia; and in 1470 the Fatih complex was completed with its eight medreses, the Sahn-ı Seman. The complex consisted of eight large and eight smaller *tetimme* medreses, contained 216 rooms for students — 152 in the large and 64 in the smaller — and remained the most prestigious school in the empire until the Süleymaniye medreses were built. The endowment deed of Mehmed II's complex provided fifteen *dânişmends* in every Sahn medrese, to be paid two aspers a day along with bread and soup from the complex's soup kitchen. The Süleymaniye complex, built between 1551 and 1557 exactly a century after Sahn-ı Seman, comprised four groups of medreses together with a medical school, a hospital and a college of hadith, and represented in architecture, resources and programme the apex of Ottoman education.

The texture of the instruction is recoverable in outline: textbooks in Arabic, Turkish spoken in the classroom, classes every day except Tuesday and Friday, admission only for boys who were literate and had come through the sıbyan mektebi, students called *softa* at the lower level and *dânişmend* at the higher, seated on cushions on the floor in domed rooms round a courtyard. The subjects ran to theology, law, medicine, astronomy, physics and mathematics.

Two things about this ladder matter for the study. It was open on ability to any Muslim boy who could get himself through the elementary school, which made it the empire's principal channel of ordinary social mobility. And it fed into the one branch of the ruling order whose members held real property and could transmit their standing to their sons — the learned hierarchy whose upper ranks were consolidating,

over the century after 1550, into a transmissible nobility. A boy who came up this ladder was entering the only part of the Ottoman elite that was not the sultan's to take away.

The other schoolroom, and the road to it

The second system began with a levy, and the levy has to be described exactly, because both the sentimental account and the indignant one depend on vagueness.

The *devşirme* — the word means collection or gathering — was the periodic levying of Christian boys from rural villages in the Balkans and Anatolia, their conversion to Islam, and their enrolment in the sultan's personal military and administrative establishment. It began informally under Murad I as a means of creating a bodyguard free of tribal or aristocratic ties, and by the reign of Murad II or Mehmed II it was a formal, regulated levy: Christian boys only, aged roughly eight to eighteen, one boy in every forty households in a district, and sometimes one in twenty in emergencies. Each cycle was authorised by an imperial decree, the timing tied to the rhythms of the countryside, generally every three to five years, with certain villages and provinces exempted — the *yürük* and *voynuk* groups, for instance, supplying auxiliary service in lieu.

A single documented instance shows the machinery working. In October 1603 an officer of the seventy-third janissary regiment entered Bursa with his men, carrying a decree empowering him to levy Christian children from the region and bring them to Istanbul; he went first to the judge's office to register the decree and to ask the judge's cooperation in gathering the boys; over the following two months the boys were selected according to criteria clearly laid down by the government, then organised into batches — *sürüş*, literally herds — of a hundred to a hundred and fifty, converted to Islam, and transported to the capital to begin their training in Turkish custom.

Then the first stage of formation, which was not a school. The selected children were placed first with Muslim Turkish families in Anatolia, the object at this stage being that they should learn Turkish, become familiar with Islamic life, and grow used to daily discipline; afterwards they were directed, according to their capacities, either to the novice corps or to the more elite stages of palace education. That first placement lasted three to seven years, and afterwards the boys were called *acemi oğlanlar* — foreign boys — even though they had by then been made Ottoman.

Two facts about how the levy was regarded belong here and must be held together with everything else. Speros Vryonis records that the Ottomans took advantage of the general Christian fear of losing children and used offers of exemption in negotiating the surrender of Christian territories, such exemptions being written into the terms

granted to Jannina, Galata, the Morea and Chios; that Christians engaged in specialised activities important to the state were exempted in recognition of the value of their work; and that exemption from this tribute was regarded as a privilege and not as a penalty. The boys were ordered to cut all ties with their families, though some used their positions to help them; Muslims were barred from the system with some exceptions, and some Muslim families smuggled their sons in anyway.

That last clause should not be turned into a defence of the institution and should not be suppressed either. Both facts are the same fact seen from two positions: the levy was dreaded by people who had nothing to gain from it and sought by people who had, and which of the two a family was depended on where it stood.

What it cost the village

The earliest contemporary description is a sermon, and it is worth quoting because it is the only place in this module where the cost is spoken by someone bearing it.

The earliest known contemporary reference to the devshirme is a sermon preached in 1395, in the reign of Bayezid I, by Isidore Glabas, metropolitan of Thessalonica, lamenting the seizure of the children by decree of the emir. He preached it on Saturday 28 February 1395, and began: "What am I to say and how am I to consider the magnitude of the present misfortune? ... I have heard the harsh decree concerning our dearest ones, and I shudder as one before a fire too hot to approach, or as one facing an invincible swordsman."

Vryonis's reading of the Greek finds in it the salient features later authors would describe: the collection of children by the emir's decree, named in the title and the opening lines; and then the fate of the tribute children — free-born youths who become slaves of the sultan, taken away by the Turks and forced to adopt different customs, barbaric clothes, barbaric speech, barbaric impiety — which he takes to refer to the period of training in Anatolia on the estates of Turkish cavalrymen and landowners, where they acquired the rudiments of Turkish and were instructed in Islam.

Clothes, speech, impiety. Read structurally rather than polemically, that list is not a bishop's rhetoric but an accurate specification of what formation *is*. To form a person is to install what he counts as good and what he counts as obvious, and the fastest way to do it to someone already half-formed is to replace the three things that carry his prior formation in daily use: what he wears, what he speaks, and what he worships. The metropolitan and the Ottoman state agreed exactly about the content of the operation and disagreed only about its value.

And the operation was not uniform in its results. Two Greek boys, Marian from Negroponte and Georges of Michelis from Preveza, were taken to the sultan's palace in 1561 and 1567. Marian performed all the prayers as a Muslim and made himself a cook in the palace kitchens; he was a novice of the palace gardens; after nine years of apprenticeship, at eighteen, he became a janissary and was sent to fight the Venetians at Cyprus in 1570, to Tunis for the siege of La Goulette in 1574, and to Persia. In 1589, at the age of thirty-seven, he presented himself to the commissariat of the Holy Office at Messina and declared that he had never forgotten his Christian origins and that he wished to return to his birthplace.

Twenty-eight years inside the most thorough formation the empire possessed, a complete military career at the far end of the Mediterranean, and an interior it had not reached. The case is not offered as proof that the formation failed — the overwhelming majority did not defect, and the empire was governed for a century and a half by men who had come through it — but as the necessary correction to reading formation as a machine that simply overwrites people. It sets the benefit dial and draws the field of the visible; it does not always take, and where it does not, the person may carry the second world silently for three decades and act on it once.

The palace as an instrument

For the small number selected for the palace, the formation was among the most elaborate in the world at the time.

The boys entered the Büyük Oda or the Küçük Oda, the Great and Small Chambers standing either side of the Gate of Felicity on the palace's third courtyard, which were the preparatory classes; the Seferli, Kiler and Hazine dormitories and the Has Oda were the upper classes. They first learned Turkish, the Quran, hunting, wrestling, javelin and mace; in the more advanced classes they studied Arabic, Persian, history and law. Alongside the sport — wrestling, archery, swordsmanship, riding, mounted games — they were trained in the fine arts of miniature, calligraphy, illumination, bookbinding and carving, and in crafts including architecture, barbering, bath-keeping, carpentry, smithing and goldsmithing, while masters taught them Turkish, Arabic, Persian, history, literature and logic. The Has Oda, the Privy Chamber, was the summit and admitted only about forty, serving the sultan directly; the treasury chamber took the most trustworthy and able and taught them finance, accounting and the state's fiscal structure.

The discipline was total and the day was scheduled. They were trained with such discipline that even their bathing hours were fixed, and the education lasted up to eight years. Nights in the dormitories were given to illumination and literary study, days to

sport, school and service; exhausted, they went to bed early and rose before dawn, and after the call to prayer the men of the Privy Chamber prayed in the tiled section of the palace mosque while the others prayed in the whitewashed section. Rank was worn: those serving in sections such as the Privy Chamber wore costly satin, silk and brocade kaftans and were called *kaftanlı*, while those in the lower chambers wore plain broadcloth and were called *dolamalı*.

And a detail that belongs in no other module. In each of the Enderun chambers there were three or five mutes, with a more senior chief mute in every room; Rycaut counted about forty of them in the mid-seventeenth century, distributed as one in the harem, two in the Privy Chamber, seven in the treasury ward, four in the pantry and eleven in the campaign ward. A formation conducted, in part, in a silence that could not carry a word outside.

At the end came the graduation, and the state's word for it is the module's title. The ceremony for those leaving the palace school was the *çıkma*, and the graduates themselves were called *çıkma*; the word means, literally, "who has exited." The transfer occurred every two to seven years, or on the accession of a new sultan; successful graduates were assigned by ability to government or to learning, and those who failed to advance went to the military. During the exits, the less gifted from the two preparatory chambers were made timariot cavalrymen or given minor bureaucratic posts.

So the sequence, stated whole: a boy exits his village at eight or ten; exits his language and his religion on a Turkish farm; exits his name; spends up to eight years in a walled courtyard acquiring the manners, tongues, crafts and loyalties of a class that exists nowhere outside those walls; and then the state's own term for his emergence into office is that he is one who has exited. He has left everything four times and arrived, each time, further inside.

This is what the framework's schoolroom looks like when it is the door rather than the antechamber. In an order where the ruling caste is closed by descent, the school admits a man to the apparatus and never to the settlement; the examination is a filter in front of a wall. Here there was no descent to be excluded by and no wall — the caste was constituted by the formation itself, and the state controlled the entrance absolutely, deciding who was taken, from where, at what age, and in what number. **Where the caste has no heredity, the schoolroom is the entrance, and severance is therefore not an addition to the formation but its precondition.** A boy admitted through a school while keeping his village, his family and his faith brings all three into the caste with him, and the caste is then no longer the sultan's. The cutting was not cruelty laid over the education. It was the reason the education worked.

The good subject, in three versions

The framework asks for the portrait of the good subject installed by formation. This empire installed three, and holding them apart is more useful than merging them.

For the *reaya*, the virtue asked was not belief but presence. Cultivate continuously; pay what the register says; do not leave; bring your disputes to the judge. The state did not require the peasant to love it, admire it, or share its religion. It required him to be where the survey said he was, doing what the survey said he did, in perpetuity — and the whole legal apparatus surrounding him, the heritable registered title on one side and the farm-breaker's penalty on the other, was built to produce exactly that and nothing more.

For the *askerî*, the virtue was service, and the exemption from taxation that service purchased was both the reward and the definition. A man was inside because he served; he stayed inside as long as he served; and his son was inside only if he too was entered in the book.

For the *kul*, the virtue was absolute obedience and the devotion of life, property and family to the master's service — a formation with no reserve in it at all, which is what the palace's eight years, its scheduled bathing hours and its mutes were for.

The yearly calendar reached the first two and left the conquered untouched. The Muslim year ran on Friday prayer with the sermon pronounced in the reigning sultan's name — the one weekly assertion of the dynasty's lawfulness that reached every Muslim town in the empire — on Ramadan and the two festivals, and on the imperial occasions that punctuated a reign: the girding of the sword at Eyüp on accession, the yearly departure of the pilgrimage caravan, and the vast public circumcision festivals of the imperial princes. The Christian villages of the Balkans kept the Orthodox year entire, with their own fasts, feasts, saints and clergy, and the state ran its tax year across both without attempting to reconcile them.

The population it formed hardest, and lost

Where formation was thin, on the framework's expectation, is at the frontier and among the conquered. This case inverts that, and the inversion is the module's sharpest finding.

The population that broke was not Christian and not conquered. It was Turcoman, Muslim, Anatolian, of the dynasty's own language and stock, and descended from the very people who had supplied its first cavalry.

The Şahkulu rebellion of 1511 was a widespread pro-Shia and pro-Safavid rising in Anatolia; it began among the Turkmen tribes of the Taurus mountains and spread to a

wide variety of disgruntled groups. It originated in the Teke region near Antalya, expanded rapidly on promises of tax relief and messianic claims, drew somewhere between ten and twenty thousand followers including Kızılbaş adherents who regarded its leader as an agent of the Mahdi, broke out on 9 April 1511 amid the succession struggle under the ageing Bayezid II, and fed on grievances that included heavy taxation and the forced settlement of pastoralists; the rebels sacked Antalya and Aydın, defeated the first Ottoman responses, killed the grand vizier Hadım Ali Pasha near Yenişehir and advanced toward Bursa before withdrawing eastward. The Safavid shah, himself partly Turkmen and a champion of the Shia, had been sending agents into Ottoman lands to attract supporters.

The response was a formation problem answered by force. Between 1512 and 1514 Selim I ordered provincial governors to compile lists of Kızılbaş and to execute or forcibly convert them — the traditional accounts give the dead in tens of thousands, a figure resting on the chronicle tradition, contested, and given here only as the range those accounts report. The suppression is remembered to this day by Alevi communities in Turkey as the founding grievance of their history, and the estimate of the toll is part of what is contested.

Why the state's own kin and not the conquered? Because formation is only contested where something is being installed. The Ottoman state never attempted to install Sunni orthodoxy in a Bulgarian village; it left the priest in place, taxed the household, and asked nothing. It did attempt to install Sunni orthodoxy in a Turcoman camp, where an older frontier Islam of dervishes and holy men — the same Islam out of which the dynasty itself had come — already held the ground, and where a rival apex across a nearby border was offering the same people a competing formation phrased in the same religious idiom and promising relief from the same taxes.

That is the whole mechanism, and it is worth stating without either of the nationalisms that have claimed it. **A state's formation apparatus generates resistance in proportion to what it is trying to change, not in proportion to how alien the population is.** The most alien population in the empire was left alone and stayed quiet for four hundred years. The least alien was pressed, and rose, and was surveyed by name and killed.

Reading formation against the framework

The framework holds that formation is a durable hierarchy's greatest advantage, because to form a person is to set his benefit dial and draw the horizon of what he can see before he is old enough to notice either being done. This case confirms it in the one place the state applied it fully and complicates it everywhere else.

The main revision is a condition on an existing prediction. The card expects that an order withholding formation from the majority remains expensive and brittle, because the displaced order simply holds the field. The Ottomans withheld it from the majority of their subjects for four centuries and paid no such price in the Balkans — and the reason is that the prediction has an unstated premise. **An order pays for withheld formation only where it needs the withheld population's conviction for something.** The Ottoman state needed the Balkan peasant's tithe, his poll-tax, his presence on a register and, at intervals, his son; it needed none of his belief, and the church that already held his belief delivered the first four more cheaply than any Ottoman school could have done, by keeping him in his village and his obedience at no cost to the treasury. The colonial cases in this collection that pay heavily for withheld formation are cases where the conqueror wanted something belief-shaped — a labour force that would present itself, a legitimacy the metropole could recognise, a subject who would police himself — and could not get it from a clergy he had not bought. Where the conqueror wants only a rate and a levy, the old formation is not a rival. It is a subcontractor.

The second finding is about the door, and it compounds what this study has already established about a settlement built on revocable claims. Where a ruling caste has no heredity, the schoolroom is not the antechamber to the caste but its entrance, and the intensity of formation and the completeness of severance turn out to be the same variable rather than two. A boy admitted through a school while retaining family, village and faith imports all three; a caste constituted purely by formation therefore has to begin by cutting, and the eight years of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, law, calligraphy and the mace are only usable because the cut came first. This is the exact converse of the arrangement in which office is open and caste is closed by blood: there, formation is safe to distribute widely because the wall stands behind it; here, there is no wall, so the formation must itself do the work of exclusion, by controlling who is taken rather than who passes.

And it compounds directly with the spine this study has been following. The empire's founding difficulty was where soldiers and administrators come from and what to pay them with; the answer, arrived at by stages, was to take them from its own subjects' children rather than from its enemies' captives. Formation is what the state did with the raw material once it had it, and every feature of the apparatus — the Turkish farmhouse, the conversion, the herds of a hundred and fifty, the walled courtyard, the fixed bathing hours, the mutes, the graded kaftans, and the word *exit* for the day a man walked out to govern a province — is a technique for manufacturing a person with no exterior. Which is why the abandonment of the child levy, when it

comes, will not be an administrative adjustment. It is the removal of the input to the only machine this empire ever built for making its own governing class, and nothing was built to replace it.

A note on sources. One exact quotation carries this module: the opening of Isidore Glabas's sermon of Saturday 28 February 1395 at Thessalonica, the earliest known contemporary reference to the child levy, quoted in the English in which it is reproduced in the modern literature and at the length the argument needs; the Greek original is public-domain fourteenth-century material, first noticed by O. Tafrali in 1913 and established as evidence for the devshirme by Speros Vryonis in *Speculum* in 1956, and Vryonis's reading of what the sermon describes — the decree, the free-born youths becoming the sultan's slaves, the enforced change of customs, clothes, speech and worship, and the Anatolian training period — is paraphrased from his essay and credited to him. The devshirme's mechanics follow the standard reference accounts and are given with their uncertainties intact: ages are variously reported as eight to fifteen, eight to eighteen and eight to twenty, and the range is given rather than a figure; the ratio of one boy per forty households, with one in twenty in emergencies, and a cycle of every three to five years, are the conventional figures and were certainly not applied uniformly across regions or centuries. The Bursa levy of October 1603, including the officer's registration of the decree with the judge, the two months of selection, and the batches of a hundred to a hundred and fifty, is from Gülay Yılmaz's study of the levied children of Bursa published in *Belleten*, as is the career of Marian of Negroponte and his appearance before the Holy Office at Messina in 1589; that case is reported as she reports it and is not offered as typical. Vryonis's observations on exemption — its use in surrender negotiations at Jannina, Galata, the Morea and Chios, its extension to Christians in specialised occupations, and its being regarded as a privilege rather than a penalty — are credited to him. The Enderun's chambers, curriculum, discipline, dress distinctions and graduation are drawn from the Turkish scholarly and museum literature on the palace school; the count of mutes is attributed to Paul Rycaut writing in the 1660s, who is a well-placed but external observer with limited access and should be read as such. Numbers for the medrese system — 216 student rooms at Sahn-ı Seman, fifteen dânişmends per medrese at two aspers a day with bread and soup — are from the endowment deed as reported in the Istanbul history project and the reference literature. On the Şahkulu rising, the dates, the origin among the Turkmen of the Taurus and the Teke region, the following of ten to twenty thousand, the death of Grand Vizier Hadım Ali Pasha and the advance toward Bursa follow the standard accounts. The compilation of lists of Kızılbaş by provincial governors between 1512 and 1514 and the executions that followed are reported here, but the death toll is not:

the figures circulating in the literature derive from the chronicle tradition, are contested, remain politically live in Turkey to this day, and are given only as the range the traditional accounts assert. No attempt is made in this module to weigh the devshirme as an atrocity or as an opportunity; the structural fact is that it was both, and the two halves have been placed side by side rather than reconciled.

A FIRMAN FROM THE SULTAN HIMSELF

Module 5 · the cost column — why the man whose labour made the surplus did not revolt; what he was actually given and what he actually paid; where the force was, and was not; and the decade in which the ledger turned over and he left

The ledger from the village

The question this module answers is narrow and it concerns one man: the cultivator, Muslim or Christian, whose labour produced the surplus that everything else in this empire consumed. Why did his ledger come out against revolt, year after year, for something like two centuries?

The lazy answers are available and both are wrong. He was not held down by terror — the empire had almost no coercive presence in its own countryside, and this module will show how little. Nor was he held by belief, at least not by the state's: the majority of the Ottoman peasantry in the sixteenth-century Balkans was Christian, had been asked to believe nothing, and went to church.

Something else was doing the work, and the framework's own vocabulary points at it. Where a common man takes the arrangement to be just, the force required to hold him falls away and can retreat to the margins; where it does not, the force has to be present and visible, and the surveillance it needs is the tell that the belief never took. This case supplies an unusually clean test of that proposition, because it contains a population that was never given the belief and was nonetheless held cheaply, and a second population that the state tried to convince and had to watch by name.

What he was given

Begin with the benefit column, because it is larger than the standard accounts on either side allow.

He held his land by a registered, heritable, court-enforceable title. The *tapu* was a permanent lease of state arable to a peasant family and also the deed certifying it; the head of the household acquired the use of the land and could pass it to his male descendants at death, in return for continuous cultivation and a set of fiscal obligations and specified services. The right was enforceable in court — unlike its English villein

equivalent — acquired by a contract registered in court and certified by a judge as in accordance with the sacred law; title came with a tax payment and three years of cultivation, after which he had security of tenure, and sultanic law recognised that long undisputed possession constituted legal possession.

He kept his religion entire, with his own clergy, his own calendar and his own community jurisdiction over marriage and inheritance. Cases involving the personal status of non-Muslim subjects were generally handled by the religious courts of their own communities.

He had a court he could use, and the evidence is that he used it. The sharia court was an official institution to which almost all subjects had to turn, only Europeans covered by capitulation agreements being exempt; litigants could employ a representative and a translator; those who appealed paid a set fee; and the court's decision or any formal copy was handed to the litigant, documents issued by the court having validity and value, so that the populace often employed them. And the decisive fact: even though they suffered from a legally subordinate status, non-Muslims did not refrain from turning to the sharia court, and their confidence in it is clear from the petitions they presented to the judge. The court registers contain cases and judgments involving people from every stratum of society, in the capital and the provinces alike — including, as the specialist literature on Kayseri, Bursa and Sofia has shown, large numbers of women and of Orthodox Christians appearing as litigants in their own right.

And above the local court there was a road to the throne. In the Ottoman system the head of the judicial mechanism was the ruler, and judicial and administrative officers acted in his name; every subject who had suffered oppression, or who was dissatisfied with a verdict given by a local court, had the right and the means to apply directly to the sultan, or to the persons and institutions he had authorised, with no intermediary whatever, in order to have the wrong put right. Complaints from subjects whose grievance could not be redressed locally were carried to the Imperial Council in Istanbul; those discussed there were first entered in the *mühimme* registers, and later the complaints arriving from every corner of the empire were recorded in dedicated *şikayet* registers — the separation dating from 1649.

The petitioners were not an abstraction. Complaints reached the council either by written petition or by the petitioner going to the council in person; in November 1752 three non-Muslim women named Terazya, Nazlı and Bosnitun travelled to Istanbul together with their brothers Mardıros, Kazer and Bogos; in the same month a man named Ali of the Kavilli tribe came in person and made his complaint; and about the same date the people of the Mamalu tribe of the Bozok district went to the council

themselves — persons of every title and occupation appearing there in person, with no distinction of settled or nomadic. The sultan frequently observed the council's proceedings through a grated window in the palace's Tower of Justice.

The state's own criminal law, moreover, was pointed as much upward as downward. Uriel Heyd's finding on the Ottoman penal codes is that they were intended not merely to protect society against criminals but to protect "the common people against oppressive officials and fief-holders", and he instances a fifteenth-century code issued on behalf of the Christians of Cephalonia, who had complained against tax-farmers and others. Provincial penal codes of this kind were drawn up for Christian populations, that for Montenegro surviving in the survey register of 1523.

And the punishments were mostly money. The codes imposed fines for fornication only where no capital penalty was inflicted, for homicide or the loss of an eye or tooth only where retaliation was not carried out, and for certain thefts only where the hand was not to be cut off — and in some statutes those conditions are not stated at all, fines being taken for granted as the only applicable penalty. Discretionary punishment lay with the judges and encompassed flogging, fines calibrated to the offender's means, banishment and, rarely, imprisonment; the fixed scriptural penalties required proof of a stringency — four eyewitnesses to the act, or repeated voluntary confession — that made their enforcement rare across the whole life of the empire.

Set this out as a subject would have experienced it and the shape is clear. He owned the use of his ground and could leave it to his sons. He worshipped as his father had. He could sue, and be heard, and be given a paper. If the judge was bought, he could go to Istanbul and stand in front of the Imperial Council, and there is documentary evidence that people of his kind did. And the law he would meet there had been written partly to restrain the very man who took his tithe.

What he paid

The other column is not small and must be set out with the same precision.

He paid the tithe on his crop, a cash farm-tax, dues on his sheep, a fee when his daughter married, and — if he was Christian — the *ispençe* in place of the Muslim farm-tax: on Imbros in the survey of 1571, twenty-five akçe for a married man and twenty for a bachelor, alongside the tithe on their produce.

And he paid the poll-tax, which was the price of his religion. Ottoman practice divided those liable into three bands — *âlâ*, *evsat* and *ednâ*, rich, middling and poor — at forty-eight, twenty-four and twelve legal dirhams of pure silver respectively, and the annual determination and proclamation of the amount lay with the ruler on a ruling given by the chief jurist. Köprülü Mustafa Pasha standardised the three bands in 1691;

men between fifteen and seventy-five were liable, while the elderly, beggars, priests, the mentally ill and the disabled were exempt, as were women and children, and exemption was also the recognised price of military obligation for the groups that carried one — the *voynuk*, the Vlachs, the *martolos*. The sum mattered to the treasury: in 894 of the Hijra, 1488–89, the poll-tax is reported at close to a third of state revenue.

What the bands meant in a real province can be seen at the end of the period. In 1174 of the Hijra, 1760, the province of Adana recorded 4,735 men liable: 443 assessed as rich at eleven *esedî* kuruş each, 3,588 as middling at five and a half, and 704 as poor at two and three-quarters.

And then the clause that undoes much of the tidiness above, and which the module has to give equal weight. Although the state fixed these rates officially, additional payments were frequently demanded from the subject population under such names as *gulâmiyye*, *maîşet*, *zahîre*, *kâtibiyye* and *kolcu akçası*. Collectors and their clerks took charges for their own maintenance and for the writing of the accounts as a matter of standing practice across the fiscal offices.

There is the real cost column. The schedule was moderate, published, graded by wealth and legally binding; the collection was something else, and the difference between the two was pocketed by the men who came to the village. Every one of the remedies described in the previous section exists because of exactly that gap. The right of petition is not evidence that the system was just. It is evidence of what the system routinely did, and of the apex's interest in limiting it.

Where the force was, and was not

Now the coercive apparatus, and the surprise is how little of it there was.

The judge who administered this law commanded nobody. Enforcement was carried out by other hands and varied by region: in Kurdish territories tribal leaders performed law-enforcement duties and collected the fines, and in Egypt peasants paid theirs to the local governors. In the Balkans the rural security force was drawn from the conquered themselves — the *martolos* companies of local Christians given privileged status in return for service, commanded by a Muslim officer or two, and in many places the only armed men between one fortress and the next. Garrisons sat in fortresses on roads and frontiers; the mountain passes were held by villages that policed them in exchange for tax relief. Between those points there was, for most of the countryside most of the time, nothing.

What is more striking is what did not exist at all. There was no internal passport, no permit to travel, no registration of movement beyond the periodic survey, no rural gendarmerie, and no political police. The state's picture of its subjects was a fiscal

register remade every few decades by men walking through villages, and between one survey and the next it did not look.

With one exception, and the exception is the finding. When the state did want to know who somebody was, it knew how, and it did it: between 1512 and 1514 Selim I ordered provincial governors to compile lists of Kızılbaş and to execute or forcibly convert them. Lists of names, compiled by the provincial administration, of a population inside the empire.

So the instrument existed and was deployed exactly once, against the smallest, nearest and most linguistically familiar population in the empire, and never against the largest and most foreign. The Ottoman state watched the Turcoman by name and did not watch the Bulgarian at all. **Surveillance appears where a belief is being installed and not where a population is alien** — because a belief that is not being asked for cannot fail to take, and there is nothing to inspect.

The trap

The framework asks a study to close this module on the specific fact that makes the order a trap rather than a contract, and here it is not the force, because there was so little of it.

The legal doors were shut. Leaving land uncultivated cost a man his holding; those who abandoned cultivated land were caught and returned to it, or made to pay the heavy farm-breaker's due. Forced residence and that penalty are in the codes from Mehmed II's time and remained legally in force until 1858.

But the deeper trap is structural, and it is the reverse side of everything in the benefit column. **Every remedy the Ottoman peasant possessed ran through the state.** His title was registered by the state, certified by the state's judge, defensible against his lord only in the state's court, and appealable only to the state's council. He had no institution of his own that could act against the apparatus: no chartered commune, no estate in an assembly, no guild with a political voice in the countryside, no lord he could play against a king, no church with lands and courts of its own that could stand between him and the fisc. His protection was excellent and it was all the same protection.

Which means the arrangement was superbly designed against one danger and undefended against another. Against the sipahi — the man immediately above him, who might have grown into a landed nobility — the peasant was armed with a registered title, a court and a road to the throne, and the sipahi was correspondingly unable to become anything more than a revenue-collector on notice. That was not an accident of benevolence. **The peasant's court was the throne's weapon against its**

own cavalry, and the justice was real precisely because it was useful. But against a general failure of the apparatus — the judge bought, the tax farmer predatory, the collector taking five extra charges, the soldier unpaid and living off the district — the peasant had exactly no move, because the only authority he could appeal to was the one that had broken.

When the ledger turned over

That failure came, and it can be dated, and what the peasantry did when it came is the strongest evidence in this module about what had been holding them.

The pressures arrived together at the end of the sixteenth century. The empire-wide price revolution driven by American silver pushed grain prices up by very large multiples by the 1590s and eroded peasant purchasing power; the cold and drought of the period brought recurrent famine and agricultural failure in Anatolia; and the demobilisation of the *sekban* musketeers after the campaigns of the 1590s put armed and unpaid men into the countryside. The revolts that followed were not attempts to overthrow the government but reactions to a social and economic crisis: currency depreciation, heavy taxation, the decline of the child levy, the admission of Muslims into the corps, and the growing dominance of the janissaries in the capital and the provinces; and with the decline of the timariot cavalry the sekban troops, recruited from the Anatolian peasantry, became the main provincial army.

The state's own discipline lit the fuse. After the victory at Mezőkeresztes in late October 1596, the commander and future grand vizier Kuyucu Murad Pasha ordered that every cavalryman not present at the roll call before the battle be hunted down and killed as a deserter; their land was confiscated, reverted to the centre and was handed out to court favourites — whereupon the dispossessed cavalry fled into Anatolia and joined the rebel bands, along with unemployed soldiers, unpaid musketeers, nomadic Kurds and Turcomans, and unemployed graduates of the religious schools. From 1598 the sekban leader Karayazıcı Abdülhalim united the discontented, and the disorder ran to 1610, with a second wave led by provincial governors from 1622 until the suppression of Abaza Hasan Pasha in 1659; these were the largest and longest-lasting rebellions in Ottoman history.

And here is what the ordinary subject did. He did not rise. The rebellions at their height between 1596 and 1610 produced such insecurity that the peasants abandoned their cultivated lands in a mass movement known as the Büyük Kaçgunluk, the Great Flight; villages were deserted from the late 1590s and agricultural production collapsed. The flight emptied the countryside into the towns and then emptied the towns as well: Kayseri and Amasya lost something approaching half their registered taxpayers during

the risings. Where peasants did take up arms, they frequently joined the rebel bands rather than face either flight or the officials.

Read as a ledger, this is unambiguous. For two centuries the cultivator's benefit column held a registered title, his own faith, a usable court and a road to the throne, and his cost column held a moderate published schedule and an immoderate collection — and the sum came out for staying. When the collection became unbounded, the soldiery became the bandits, the courts stopped delivering and the coin lost its value, the sum came out the other way, and he exercised the only power he had ever possessed, which was to stop being where the register said he was.

That is a form of power the framework should credit precisely. It changed nothing about who ruled. It did not seize an apparatus or produce a programme. But it destroyed the revenue base of an empire for a generation and forced the state into the tax-farming arrangements that would eventually dissolve the whole settlement — because a state whose fiscal system rests on knowing where each household is cannot function against a population that has decided not to be found.

Reading the cost column against the framework

The card holds that where the belief is thick the force stands at the margins, and that surveillance is the tell of a belief that never took. This case confirms the second proposition sharply and requires an addition to the first, because it contains an order in which force stood at the margins over a population whose belief had never been sought at all.

The addition is about what filled the benefit column. It was not conviction. The Balkan Christian cultivator was not persuaded that the sultan was God's shadow on earth and was never asked to be. What he was given was something narrower, cheaper and, on this evidence, nearly as effective: **a set of enforceable claims against the man immediately above him.** A title the judge would uphold, a court that took his fee and gave him a paper, a right to go over the head of the man extracting from him and be heard at the top. State the mechanism generally, because it is the module's contribution: **an apex can price defection low without managing the belief of the ruled at all, provided it supplies the producer with a working remedy against his immediate extractor.** And note why this is such an attractive instrument. It is nearly free. It costs the apex nothing it wanted to keep, because it is paid for out of the intermediary's discretion rather than the centre's revenue — indeed the apex gains twice, since every restraint placed on the sipahi in the peasant's favour is also a restraint on the sipahi's capacity to become a rival. **Justice supplied from the top is the**

cheapest substitute for belief in the repertoire, and it is cheap precisely because the apex is not the one who pays for it.

The corollary is the trap, and the two must be stated together or the first becomes flattery. An apex that supplies the only remedy has also made itself the only possible defendant. Where the producer's protection is entirely the centre's protection — no chartered town, no estate, no independent church with lands, no lord to be played against a king — he is very well defended against the one man above him and wholly undefended against a general failure of the apparatus. The Ottoman peasant could beat his cavalryman in court and had no move at all when the cavalryman, the judge, the collector and the soldier were the same racket. What happened after 1596 is the demonstration, and it should be recorded as a structural property of this arrangement rather than as a misfortune that befell it.

Two things compound with what this study has already established.

The exit variable needs stating as a ratio rather than a state. The framework asks whether the door is open or shut; here it was legally shut — forced residence, the farm-breaker's due, in the codes for four centuries — and physically wide open, and for two hundred years nobody used it, and then several hundred thousand people did within fifteen years. Nothing about the door changed. **What a subject weighs is not whether he may leave but what leaving costs against what staying costs**, and a legal prohibition on flight is worth exactly as much as the arrangement it is protecting.

And the surveillance rule comes out of this module sharpened rather than merely confirmed. The Ottoman state kept no watch whatever over the largest, most foreign and most numerous population it ruled, and compiled lists of individuals by name for the smallest and most closely related. The absence of the instrument in the Balkans is not evidence of tolerance and its presence in Anatolia is not evidence of bigotry. **Surveillance tracks the belief a state is trying to install, not the strangeness of the people it is ruling** — and the state that watches nobody has usually not become gentle. It has stopped asking.

A note on sources. This module rests on modern scholarship more heavily than its predecessors and quotes almost nothing directly, because the material — court registers, complaint registers, poll-tax registers — survives in Ottoman Turkish in quantities no study in English can do more than report at second hand. Uriel Heyd's *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law* (1973) is the authority for the penal codes, and his finding that they were framed to protect the common people against oppressive officials and fief-holders is quoted in six words and otherwise paraphrased; the fifteenth-century code for the Christians of Cephalonia and the Montenegrin code in the survey of 1523 are his instances. The right of petition, the recording of complaints

in the *mühimme* registers and their separation into dedicated *şikayet* registers from 1649, and the individual petitioners of November 1752, are drawn from the Turkish scholarly literature on the complaint registers; the petitioners' names are given as that literature gives them, and the study of eighty-six rulings from Skopje for 1649–75 on which the proportions of written and personal petitions rest could not be read at first hand and its percentages are therefore not reproduced here. The evidence on non-Muslim and female use of the sharia courts follows Ronald Jennings on Kayseri, Haim Gerber on Bursa and Rossitsa Gradeva on Sofia, credited and paraphrased, together with the general account of court procedure in the literature on Jewish litigants. Poll-tax figures are given as their sources give them: the three bands at forty-eight, twenty-four and twelve dirhams of silver, standardised by Köprülü Mustafa Pasha in 1691; liability from fifteen to seventy-five with the stated exemptions; the Adana distribution of 1760; and the İmbros rates of 1571 from the Gallipoli survey. The report that the poll-tax approached a third of state revenue in 1488–89 comes from a single Turkish study and is given as reported rather than adopted. The additional charges levied beyond the schedule — *gulâmiyye*, *maîşet*, *zahîre*, *kâtibiyye*, *kolcu akçası* — are from the same study and are the most important fact in the section. On the Celali crisis the account follows Mustafa Akdağ, whose concept of the Great Flight this module uses, together with the standard reference literature; Kuyucu Murad Pasha's order after Mezőkeresztes is reported as the modern accounts report it. The population losses at Kayseri and Amasya are given as one study's estimate of registered taxpayers rather than of people, and the far larger displacement figures circulating in the literature are not reproduced, because they rest on extrapolation from exactly the registers the flight rendered useless. Finally, a caution about the whole module: the sources for the benefit column are the state's own records of its own remedies, and a state records the petitions it answered rather than the ones it ignored. That the machinery existed, that ordinary people including non-Muslim women used it, and that it was worth a journey to Istanbul are established; how often it worked is not, and no figure should be inferred from its survival.

TWELVE AKÇE FOR BARLEY WORTH TWENTY-THREE

Module 6 · extraction — what was taken, in what form, and at whose price; how an emergency levy became a permanent one without anyone deciding it; and the two dated statutes by which a state built on revocable claims sold the claims themselves

Where the surplus went

Before the mechanisms, one structural fact that governs the whole module: in the classical Ottoman system most of what was extracted never reached a treasury.

The survey registers of Süleyman's early reign and the budget of 1527–28 show the number of revenue assignments reaching 37,000, with their holders disposing of roughly forty per cent of the land-based taxes. That forty per cent was collected in the village and consumed in the village by the man who collected it, in exchange for turning up mounted with a stated number of retainers. A further large share went to pious endowments, and another to the sultan's own domains and those of the imperial family. The central treasury received the customs, the poll-tax, the mines, the remittances from Egypt after 1517, and what the assignments did not swallow.

This matters because it means the Ottoman state of the sixteenth century extracted on an enormous scale and banked very little. Its army was paid at source out of a stream that never passed through its hands. When the wars later demanded cash — for artillery, for fortresses, for salaried infantry — the state discovered that most of its revenue was already spent before it arrived, and everything in the second half of this module follows from that discovery.

The schedule

What the cultivator owed was set out in the provincial codes attached to the surveys, and it came in two currencies.

In kind, he owed the tithe on his crop — the *öşür*, nominally a tenth, in practice varying by province and by the conqueror's arrangement with the district, and rising in places well above that: the Cretan code of 1670 set the land tax at a fifth.

In cash, he owed a farm-tax on his holding, the *çift resmi* if he was Muslim and the *ispençe* if he was not — on Imbros in the survey of 1571, twenty-five akçe for a married

man and twenty for a bachelor, alongside the tithe on their produce — together with dues on sheep, a fee on a marriage, a charge on a widow, and, if he was Christian, the poll-tax: three bands, *âlâ*, *evsat* and *ednâ*, at forty-eight, twenty-four and twelve legal dirhams of silver, the annual amount determined and proclaimed by the ruler on a ruling from the chief jurist. That last was no minor item — in 1488–89 the poll-tax is reported at close to a third of state revenue.

Each mechanism came with its warrant. The tithe was the Quranic levy on produce. The poll-tax was the sacred law's charge on the protected non-Muslim, its very bands taken from the earliest Islamic precedent. And the sultanic taxes — the farm-tax, the market dues, the mine shares — were the ruler's *kanun*, held lawful by the jurists on the ground of public welfare, which is the mechanism this study has already traced in the reconciliation of the sultan's law with God's.

What may it be paid in, and who sets the price of the only thing he has to sell

Here the framework supplies a test and this case forces it open.

The test as the card states it is binary. A tax payable in kind is revenue. A tax payable only in the conqueror's coin, levied on a household that lives by subsistence and holds none, is a labour draft in disguise, because the household must now leave home to earn coin in the conqueror's enterprises, and the compulsion has been moved out of the statute book and into the arithmetic of the family.

The Ottoman system is neither. It is mixed, and the mixture is the finding. The tithe came in kind: sacks of grain, taken at the threshing floor. The personal taxes came in cash: a fixed number of akçe, owed annually, by a household that grew wheat and barley and held no coin at all.

Follow the arithmetic from the household's side, as the card instructs. He must produce a fixed sum of silver each year. There is one place to get it: he must sell grain. And the market into which he sells is not free. Price ceilings in urban markets — the *narh* — had their origins in early Islamic tradition, but the Ottomans relied on them more frequently; and in provisioning the army and the urban economy, deliveries at fixed prices were required. The judiciary and the market inspectorate were put in charge of prices; it was occasionally decreed that the price of certain foodstuffs would not be allowed to rise at all; and the wholesale merchants were bound to report to the authorities any colleague who exceeded the administered price. The overriding purpose was the abundance of the capital: an official appointed in 1803 to supervise the merchants had his brief stated plainly — to protect the public from exploitation by

merchants, to ensure a steady and abundant supply of food to the markets of Istanbul, and to maintain the *narh* price.

So the peasant owes coin; the only route to coin is the sale of his crop; and the price at which he may sell it is set administratively by the authority he owes it to, in the interest of a city he will never see.

That is not a labour draft. Nobody was pushed toward a mine compound or a settler farm; nobody left home; no wage economy was manufactured. **It is a third thing the card does not yet name: a compulsion not of the body but of the crop.** The direction the tax pushes is not the payer's body toward a wage but his harvest toward the capital, and the instrument that does the pushing is not the tax schedule but the price schedule beside it.

The Ottomans had a word for the operation. The sixteenth-century term *bedel-i avâriz* signalled precisely a substitution of cash for kind — a change from the way a levy had originally been collected. The state named the conversion in its own fiscal vocabulary and did it deliberately, and any instrument built only to detect a coin tax on a coinless household will register the Ottoman arrangement as ordinary revenue and miss it entirely.

The disguise comes off in the war levies. The *sürsat* was food requisitioning with price controls, obliging the population to provide supplies at a pre-fixed price unlikely to be favourable or even merely symbolic; the *iştira* was the same obligation nominally at market price; and over time all these were transformed into extraordinary cash taxes on the people living near the army's route. During the eastern campaigns of 1637–38 the market price of barley was twenty-three akçe the *kile*, but under the sürsat villagers were obliged to sell barley to the army at twelve — and those who did not sell barley paid cash instead, at sums varying from twenty to sixty akçe.

Read that arithmetic twice. The state took the grain at roughly half its price, or, from the man who had no grain to spare, a cash sum that could be more than twice what the grain it replaced was worth. The purchase was compulsory, the price was the buyer's, and the alternative to selling cost more than selling.

And the burden was distributed by political calculation rather than by capacity to pay. Some favoured groups were exempt from the sürsat, and in the Balkans many Christian settlements were exempted, apparently to discourage rebellion during warfare with neighbouring Christian kingdoms. The state knew exactly which of its subjects had somewhere else to look, and taxed them less.

The rate that rose without anyone raising it

The classical arrangement is unambiguously extraction as a rate rather than as dispossession. The object was a flow — the harvest, the fleece, the market due — drawn at a tunable proportion from a producer the state needed alive, in his village, cultivating. Its whole legal apparatus says so: heritable registered tenure on one side, a penalty on the lord who ruined a village on the other. There was no settler, no clearance, no ground taken as a stock. So the equilibrium the framework predicts should have held, and for something like a century and a half it did.

What moved it is the most instructive fiscal process in the case, because it happened without a decision.

The *avâriz* and *nüzul* levies originated in the late fifteenth century as irregular imposts raised at times of military need, and by the first quarter of the seventeenth century had become virtually annual levies throughout the majority of the Rumelian and Anatolian provinces, by then among the most important regular sources of government revenue. Taxes that had been levied only in extraordinary times such as war were made permanent toward the end of the sixteenth century; where a levy on cereals had originally been taken under the name *nüzul*, the lengthening of the campaigns and the multiplication of fronts brought in further levies — the *sürsat*, the *iştira*, the *bedel-i kürekçi*, the price of a galley oarsman — for the army's other needs.

No statute made the emergency permanent. The emergency simply did not end, the levy was raised again the following year and the year after that, and at some point the provincial codes began to record as a standing item what had been introduced as an exception. **An extraction rate ratchets most reliably not by legislation but by repetition**, and the mark of the ratchet having closed is philological: it is the moment a levy called *extraordinary* stops being unusual and the word survives as a fossil in its name. The Ottoman word for these taxes continued to mean "extraordinary" for two hundred years after they had become annual.

That ratchet, arriving together with a silver inflation, a run of failed harvests and armed unpaid soldiery in the countryside, is what turned the cultivator's ledger over and produced the mass abandonment of the land that this study has already traced. The framework's "just enough" equilibrium did not fail because anyone decided to push past it. It failed because a war that would not end kept renewing a levy that had been designed not to be renewed.

Selling the stream

The state's response to the resulting hole is the module's spine, and it is a sequence of dated statutes each of which solved a cash problem and created a proprietor.

The first instrument was the ordinary tax farm, the *iltizam*: the right to collect a defined revenue, auctioned for a short term to whoever would pay most for it. It raised money at once and had an obvious defect, which is that a man holding a three-year right to squeeze a district has no interest whatever in the district's condition in the fourth year.

The second was designed to cure exactly that. The *malikane* system came into effect by an edict of 1695: the right to collect the revenues of a fiscal unit was granted to entrepreneurs for life, at their own responsibility, with certain rights guaranteed under the supervision of a committee consisting of the chief jurist, the marshal of the Prophet's descendants and the chief justices. Auctions were held in Istanbul; the highest bidder for the cash price called the *muaccele* received a certificate recognising his rights and responsibilities. He paid that large lump sum on entry and an annual rent, the *mal*, thereafter; the system was introduced in a period of extreme financial hardship and severe budget deficits caused by the long and costly war with the Habsburgs, and it played a crucial role in restoring the state's finances. What was expected of the holder was that, over a lifetime's tenure, he would protect both the revenue source and the subjects on it, while paying the annual sum regularly.

The edict's own reasoning is the thing to keep, because it is the extraction's robe stated by its author. The founding edict declares the arrangement legally preferable — *mustahsan* — resting its legitimacy on the treasury's necessity and on the customary tax-farming practice of Egypt, accepted as established custom. Necessity and precedent: a state that had spent two centuries insisting that every claim within it was revocable at the sovereign's word now issued an instrument granting a claim for life, and had it declared not merely permissible but preferable, by the same jurists who had declared the earlier doctrine lawful.

It did not hold. The malikane proved no definitive remedy for the fiscal crisis: the absence of competitive conditions in the market for these grants prevented effective functioning, since the high entry prices led some bidders into tacit alliances, so that the expected revenue was not obtained from the sums paid to the treasury. The holders acquired a revenue stream they could treat as if it were their own possession. By 1793, as part of his New Order, Selim III was revoking many of these leases and reverting to short-term auctions, in order to restore central oversight and raise immediate revenue.

And the third instrument went further than the second. The practice of debt securities began in 1775, used for the first time at the Istanbul tobacco customs and

later extended to other districts; by 1774 the *esham* had emerged as a form of long-term government paper, redeemable after ten to twenty-five years and traded on Istanbul's markets. Shares in a future revenue stream, sold to the public for cash today, and thereafter changing hands among strangers.

Set the three beside the settlement they replaced and the movement is exact and it runs backwards. That settlement had been engineered so that nothing within the empire was a thing and everything was a claim: a revenue struck from a register, a post that reverted, an estate that lapsed at death, land whose bare ownership belonged to the sovereign and whose possessors held only a right of use. The whole apparatus existed to ensure that no servant of the state could acquire anything the state could not take back. Then, under fiscal duress, in dated statutes, with juristic approval, **the state converted its own relations back into things and sold them** — first for a lifetime, then in tradable shares.

This is the same conversion the modern colonial statute performs on a conquered people's land, run here by an apex upon itself. And the reason is the same in both cases: **a relation cannot be sold and a thing can.** A revocable claim raises no money, because nobody pays for what can be withdrawn; to raise cash against a revenue stream, the stream must first be made into property. The Ottoman state's most distinctive institutional achievement — universal revocability — turned out to be, at the moment of crisis, the only collateral it had, and it spent it.

Every sale moved a stream of income permanently beyond the centre's reach and manufactured a holder with an interest in resisting its recovery. The provincial notables who dominate the eighteenth century, and whose accumulated power the reforming sultans would spend the nineteenth trying to break, are in large part the buyers at these auctions. The state created the class that would constrain it, out of its own revenue, deliberately, one certificate at a time, because it needed the money that year.

What must be conceded

Three things, and none of them is small.

The need was real. The wars against the Habsburgs and the Safavids were long, and the fiscal demands of gunpowder armies grew faster than any agrarian revenue could. A state that had paid its cavalry by handing out the right to collect from villages could not pay for artillery trains and salaried infantry the same way, and it did not invent the difficulty.

The instruments worked. The malikane played a crucial role in restoring state finances. The revisionist scholarship on this period is right that the eighteenth-century fiscal transformation was in significant part successful adaptation and not simple decay:

the empire remained solvent, defended enormous frontiers, and lasted another two centuries. A reader should resist hearing decline in every sentence of this module.

And the Ottoman fiscal order was, by the standards of what surrounded it, restrained where it counted. Its price controls were pointed at protecting urban consumers, and the picture of rigid permanent interventionism has been overdrawn: the Ottomans became increasingly conscious of the limits of intervention, learned that ceilings far from market realities could not be enforced for long, applied the instrument selectively to the capital, the army and selected commodities, and came to treat the *narh* as reserved for extraordinary conditions rather than as permanent policy.

The objection this module makes is therefore narrow. Not that the Ottomans taxed, which every state does; not that they taxed heavily, which the wars required. It is that an instrument adopted to survive a war was found to do a second thing — to manufacture, out of the state's own revenue, a class of proprietors holding heritable claims on it — and that the second thing was then designed for and extended. Which is, as the framework observes elsewhere, the ordinary way institutions acquire their real purposes.

Reading extraction against the framework

Three findings go back to the card, and only the first is a new instrument.

The medium-of-payment test needs a third case. The card asks what a tax may be paid in and reads two answers: in kind, and it is revenue; in the conqueror's coin from a household that holds none, and it is a labour draft with the compulsion relocated into the family's arithmetic. The Ottoman arrangement returns a third. It is a cash tax on a household that *can* obtain coin, but only by selling the one commodity it has, into a market whose prices the state administers and in which the state and its capital are the dominant buyers. Nobody is compelled to leave home; no wage market is created; the household stays exactly where the register says it is, which is precisely what this state wanted. **So the test must be extended: ask not only what the tax may be paid in, but who sets the price of the only thing the payer has to sell.** The direction a tax pushes may be a body toward a mine or a crop toward a capital, and an instrument built to detect the first will report the second as unremarkable revenue. Where the answers are *coin* and *the state*, the tax is a requisition wearing a schedule — and the sürsat, obliging a village to hand over barley worth twenty-three akçe for twelve, is the same instrument with the schedule removed.

The second finding is about how a rate rises. The card treats extraction as sitting at a tunable distance from the revolt threshold, adjusted by an extractor watching the dials. This case shows the commonest real movement to be something else: **an**

emergency levy becomes an ordinary one by repetition, and nobody decides it. The avâriz was raised for a war, and the war did not end, and it was raised again, and within a century it was among the state's principal regular revenues while still bearing a name that meant *extraordinary*. No statute made it permanent; no minister proposed it; there is no document to point at. The card should carry the instruction to look, in every case, for the levy introduced as an exception and to date the year it stopped being one — and to treat the survival of the word *extraordinary* in a standing tax as the fossil that marks the ratchet having closed.

And the third compounds the spine of this study rather than adding to the card. This empire's founding problem was where soldiers come from and what to pay them with, and its answer was to pay in revocable claims rather than in money — an army obtained, as the sources put it, at almost no expense to the treasury. The whole legal architecture of universal revocability existed to make that answer safe. What this module establishes is the bill. When the costs of war outgrew what claims could buy, the state possessed no accumulated treasure, because it had never collected the revenue in the first place; its only asset was the future stream itself; and a stream can only be borrowed against once it has been made saleable. So the state undid its own central principle in two dated statutes, 1695 and 1774–75, granting for life what had been granted at pleasure and then selling shares in what had been granted for life. **The revocability that made the settlement work was the state's collateral, and the collateral was spent** — and the men who bought it are the men the next century of this study will have to account for.

A note on sources. This module quotes no primary text directly and depends throughout on the modern scholarship, which for Ottoman fiscal history is unusually strong and unusually quantified. The classical schedule follows the standard reference literature and the provincial codes as reported in it; the Imbros rates of 1571 are from Yılmaz Kurt's study of poll-tax collection, the Cretan fifth from Oktay Özel's work on the land system, and the poll-tax bands and their standardisation in 1691 from the Turkish Religious Foundation's encyclopaedia. The report that the poll-tax approached a third of state revenue in 1488–89 rests on a single Turkish study and is given as reported. The figures of 37,000 assignments and forty per cent of land taxes consumed at source are those established earlier in this study from the surveys of Süleyman's early reign and the budget of 1527–28, and carry the same caution: all Ottoman quantities derived from the registers are orders of magnitude. On the *avâriz* and *nüzul* the module follows Darling and the Belleten study of Karaman for 1620–1700, whose finding that these were virtually annual across most provinces by the first quarter of the seventeenth century is the load-bearing claim; the term *bedel-i avâriz* as a

substitution of cash for kind is from the same study. The sürsat arithmetic of 1637–38 — barley at twenty-three akçe the kile on the market, twelve under requisition, and cash substitutes of twenty to sixty — is the single most important set of figures in the module and is given exactly as the reference literature reports it from Halil Sahillioğlu's work; it describes one campaign on one frontier and should not be generalised into a rate. The exemption of many Balkan Christian settlements from the sürsat, and the political reasoning attributed to it, is likewise reported rather than independently established. On the provisioning order and price ceilings the module follows Şevket Pamuk, including his explicit caution that the picture of rigid permanent Ottoman interventionism is overdrawn, which is quoted at length precisely because it cuts against the module's own emphasis. The *malikane* follows Mehmet Genç, whose work founded this field, together with Erol Özvar's archival study of the sales of 1695–97 and Baki Çakır on the fiscal units; the founding edict's declaration that the arrangement is *mustahsan* and its resting of legitimacy on the treasury's necessity and on Egyptian custom is from the doctoral study of the system's legal basis and is the most valuable single fact in the second half of the module. The *esham* is dated 1774 in some accounts and 1775 in others, the discrepancy is not resolved here, and the first application at the Istanbul tobacco customs is reported as the Istanbul history project reports it. Selim III's revocations of 1793 are given as the reference literature gives them. Finally, the concessions in the penultimate section are not decoration: the revisionist case against reading the eighteenth century as decline is strong, is accepted here, and constrains what the closing section is entitled to claim.

THE FIRMANS NOBODY HAS SEEN

Module 7 · information and suppression — an empire with almost no censorship apparatus; a printing prohibition that appears to have been composed in Paris; the one press that was destroyed and who arranged it; and a seam held not by an imperial censor but by community heads the sultan appointed, paid attention to, and could remove

The instrument that is not there

The framework asks who controls the interpretation of the belief, what alternatives are suppressed, and by what apparatus. Applied to the Ottoman Empire between 1453 and 1800 the question returns an answer that looks at first like a research failure.

There was no index of prohibited books. There was no licensing office through which a manuscript had to pass. There was no imperial censor, no inquisition, no body charged with examining what the sultan's subjects read. Across the same three centuries the Papacy maintained an Index and a Holy Office, the Spanish crown ran an Inquisition with a printing licence system, England licensed its presses through the Stationers' Company and the Star Chamber, and France required royal privilege for publication. The Ottoman state, ruling more people and more religions than any of them, built none of this.

The standard explanation for the gap is that no such apparatus was needed because the technology itself had been forbidden. That explanation should be examined first, because it turns out to be the most instructive single item in the module.

The ban that cannot be found

Kathryn Schwartz's study of the question begins with the documents themselves and ends by dismantling the story.

Scholars name four old orders concerning printing, from Bayezid II, Selim I, Murad III and Ahmed III. The two that supposedly banned printing — those of Bayezid and Selim — are exactly the two that no one can show ever existed; as Schwartz puts it, no one has claimed to have seen them. Worse still, those same two sultans kept a wide variety of printed texts on a range of subjects, from Europe, in their own libraries. She finds little evidence to support the notion that the Porte maintained a negative view of printing; when the government dealt with printing at all, it permitted certain people to print certain books, and it never banned the technology.

The earliest order about print that actually survives points the other way. Murad III issued the earliest extant firman concerning print in 1588, and it survives at the back of the 1594 Arabic edition of Euclid's *Elements* — permitting the sale on Ottoman soil of books in Arabic, Persian and Turkish that had been printed in Europe. The first documented Ottoman act of state regarding the printing press is a licence to import and sell.

So where did the prohibition come from? Schwartz traces it, and the answer is exact. The first person to publish the assertion appears to have been the French Franciscan and cosmographer André Thevet, who wrote about the supposed firmans in the second volume of his eight-volume *True Portraits and Lives of Illustrious Greek, Latin, and Pagan Men*, printed at Paris in 1584 — in his chapter on "Jean Guttemberg, Inventor of Printing," where he compared the invention and adoption of printing in Europe with the technology's absence in the East. Schwartz charts the life-cycle of the rumour from there: originating in early modern Europe, adopted by nineteenth-century Ottomans, and stabilised through twentieth-century historians.

And a contrary witness was available from early on and ignored. Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, who had first-hand dealings with the Ottomans for twenty years from the 1680s — travelling in the empire, fighting against it for the Habsburgs, and living among janissaries as a prisoner of war — challenged the notion that the sultans had banned printing, while recording plainly that the Turks did not in fact print their books. Marsigli had noticed the distinction that the story collapses: that a thing is not done is not evidence that it has been forbidden.

This is worth naming as a methodological finding before the module goes further, because it is the sharpest instance in this collection of a particular failure. **A suppression that consists of an absence cannot be detected by instruments built to count acts.** There are no burnings, no trials, no confiscation registers, no censor's marginalia — because there was nothing to burn and nobody to try. Into that documentary silence a foreign explanation was inserted, by a writer whose subject was the greatness of Gutenberg and whose audience was European, and the explanation was then adopted by the Ottomans' own descendants when they came to explain their nineteenth-century position to themselves. **Where a record is silent, establish who filled the silence and what they were explaining to whom.**

What was printing, and in whose letters

The absence of Turkish printing was also not an absence of printing.

Printing of any type in the Ottoman Empire began with Rabbi Jacob ben Asher's incunable of 1493, the *Arba'ah Turim* — produced in Istanbul, in Hebrew characters,

within months of the arrival of the Jews expelled from Spain whom the sultan had invited in. Armenian and Greek printing followed within the same broad period, the Armenian press at Constantinople dating from the second half of the sixteenth century. These enterprises were not tolerated exceptions granted by grace and liable to withdrawal. They ran, in some cases, for centuries.

The reason is simpler than the historiography has generally allowed, and it is worth stating plainly because it dissolves the puzzle rather than answering it. These communities printed in their own alphabets, for their own readerships, in their own liturgical and legal traditions. Nothing an Armenian printer set in Armenian type for Armenian readers fell within any Ottoman official's jurisdiction, competence or interest — because the jurisdiction over what Armenians read had already been given away, to the head of the Armenian community, by the sultan, in writing. The state did not permit these presses in the sense of examining and approving them. It had no standing to examine them. That standing belonged to somebody else, and the somebody else was the state's own appointee.

Which is the module's real subject.

The one press that was destroyed

There is exactly one celebrated case of a press being destroyed in Ottoman Istanbul, and it is invariably cited as evidence of Ottoman hostility to printing. Examined closely it shows something else entirely.

The first Greek printing press in Constantinople was established in 1627 by the Patriarch himself, Cyril Lucaris, to counter the propaganda of the Jesuits and the Protestants, and he employed the scholar-monk Nikodemos Metaxas of Cephalonia to run it. Metaxas had learned the trade in London; once the press was installed he printed a series of theological works in Greek under Lucaris's direction, most of them anti-Roman in character; and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith had set up a Greek press of its own in Rome the year before.

Metaxas arrived with his press in July 1627. In January 1628 the press was confiscated by janissaries. In February the Jesuits were imprisoned and exiled. In June Metaxas was elevated to the archbishopric of his native island, and in September he was in Venice, printing for Lucaris there. It is alleged that the Ottoman authorities acted at the instigation of the French ambassador, who was closely associated with the Jesuits. Ten years later, in 1638, Lucaris was arrested, convicted of treason by high-ranking Ottoman officials and killed by janissaries.

Read the sequence as a whole and it is not an empire suppressing a technology. It is two European Christian factions fighting a doctrinal war inside the Ottoman capital,

each attempting to use the Ottoman state as a weapon against the other, and the Ottoman state acting as an arbiter that swung one way in January and the opposite way in February. The French diplomatic correspondence of December 1627 shows the Jesuits themselves under attack and expecting worse, their protector reporting to his king that had the deputy grand vizier followed the writings of the man persecuting them, they would have been thrown into the sea. The doctrinal question at issue was the procession of the Holy Spirit. No Ottoman had any stake in it whatever.

What censorship there was in the affair was the printer's own. The editing of Lucaris's tract *Against the Jews*, which Metaxas published in the same year, reveals a curious instance of the printer's self-censorship. The restraint operated in the printing house, in anticipation, and left no trace in any state record — which is the form censorship characteristically takes where the state has not built an apparatus and everyone knows there are limits.

The seam was not held. It was subcontracted.

Now the answer to the question this module opened with, and it lies in a document type this study has already met in another connection.

After 1453 Mehmed II appointed the monk Gennadios Scholarios as patriarch, and the appointment was ratified by an official document — a *berat* — stipulating his prerogatives: authority over the clergy, management of the Church's properties, the application of Byzantine law to members of the Greek Orthodox community, and the right to collect taxes; and the same prerogatives are found in the appointment diplomas of later patriarchs. The older account has him made head of the entire Christian community with the right to administer, to tax and to exercise justice over the Christians of the empire — his power ceasing to be purely canonical and spiritual and becoming political as well, so that to the Greeks he appeared as heir to the Byzantine patriarchs and to the Ottomans he was the official and strictly controlled administrator of his community.

That older account needs a caution, and this study has flagged it before: the tidy empire-wide system of confessional communities with the patriarch as ethnarch is substantially a later construction read backwards, and the modern work on the patriarchal berats has taken it apart. Tom Papademetriou's study argues that the Ottoman state regarded the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy primarily as tax farmers, for cash income derived from the Church's widespread properties, and that the arrangement descended from economic dealings between bishops and Turkish emirs that long predated 1453. The relationship began as a revenue contract and acquired its jurisdictional grandeur afterwards.

But whichever emphasis is taken, the structural fact is identical and it is what this module needs. The sultan appointed the man; the appointment specified his powers over his own people; the state enforced his rulings; and the state could remove him. What the state wanted in return was stated with complete frankness — in a directive of the nineteenth century, later than this study's period and quoted here as a late formulation of a long practice: the government invited the Greek community to nominate a patriarch who would best impose on the community the fulfilment of the obligations of subjecthood and would always serve the state with loyalty; the nominee should be someone who would never put his community in danger by encouraging sedition, and who would immediately report the bandits, ill-wishers and misfits in his community to the state — the community to submit its choice, and the state to appoint him.

There is the whole arrangement in one sentence, written by the party that benefited. The state does not want to know what the Greeks are reading, saying or arguing about. It wants a man who will keep them quiet, deliver their taxes, and report the ones who will not be kept quiet — and it will appoint him, and it will unappoint him.

So the framework's trusted-information position was neither vacated nor captured here. **It was subcontracted.** Each community's interpreter class was left intact, funded from its own people, given jurisdiction over them, held answerable to the Porte for their obedience, and made removable at the Porte's word. The policing was then done inside each community, in its own language and alphabet, by men whose tenure depended on doing it and who had their own doctrinal reasons for doing it thoroughly. An empire that has bought every community's censor does not need a censor.

And the arrangement had a further property that a state would have had to be inventive to design. Because each community's authority was doctrinal, its policing reached places no imperial officer could go: into liturgy, into marriage, into schooling, into what could be said from a pulpit. Lucaris did not import a press because the sultan wanted Greek books; he imported it to fight the Jesuits for control of Orthodox belief. The seam inside the Greek community was being contested fiercely throughout the seventeenth century — and the contest was between Geneva, Rome and the Phanar, with the Ottoman state present only as the muscle either side might rent.

Where the state did suppress

None of this makes the empire liberal, and the module would be dishonest if it stopped here. There was real suppression, it was severe, and its target is the finding.

In 1527 a preacher named Molla Kabız was tried before the Imperial Council for maintaining a doctrine about the relative standing of Jesus and Muhammad, and was

executed for it. Between 1512 and 1514, as this study has already established, provincial governors were ordered to compile lists by name of the Kızılbaş, whose adherence to a rival dynasty was expressed in religious terms, and to execute or forcibly convert them. Through the seventeenth century the puritan preachers of the *kadızadeli* movement pressed for the suppression of Sufi practice, and the state oscillated between them and the orders they attacked, at times violently.

Every one of those episodes is internal to Islam.

That is the pattern, and it is exact. The Ottoman state had a great deal to say about what a Muslim might believe, teach and preach, and enforced it with executions, name-lists and exile. It had almost nothing to say about what a Christian or a Jew might read, print or argue, and built no instrument capable of finding out. The two facts are not in tension and neither is evidence about Ottoman character. **The state policed the belief it was running on and left alone the beliefs it was not**, because a doctrinal deviation among Muslims was a crack in the thing that made its own rule lawful, and a doctrinal quarrel among Greeks was somebody else's contract to enforce.

The printing that came, and what it needed

When Turkish printing finally arrived, the shape of the negotiation confirms everything above.

Grand Vizier Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Pasha supported the project, and the establishment was authorised on condition that only non-religious works be printed; a fetva was obtained from Şeyhülislam Abdullah Efendi for the printing of non-religious books, and approval was obtained from Ahmed III; the press was established on 16 December 1727. The imperial decree gave Müteferrika the right to publish books useful to the community, and he afterwards obtained the chief jurist's ruling on the benefits of printing. Sixteen written endorsements from prominent religious officials supported the enterprise.

The opposition, meanwhile, came from a quarter with a balance sheet rather than a doctrine. The press was set up in spite of serious opposition from religious quarters and from the calligraphers, who expected to be put out of business. One contemporary European account of the eventual suppression of the press puts it squarely on the copyists: those who maintained themselves by copying books, apprehending with reason that their trade would be totally ruined, were so loud in their complaints as to alarm the palace, and were supported by a seditious corps of janissaries, so that the sultan — having mounted the throne by one insurrection and fearing to be tumbled from it by another — gave way.

The press published its first book in 1729, and by 1743 had issued seventeen works in twenty-three volumes, each in editions of between five hundred and a thousand; the first was a two-volume Arabic-Turkish dictionary; and the printing of religious books remained prohibited until 1803.

Three things in that sequence matter. The jurists did not obstruct — sixteen of them put their names to endorsements, and the chief among them issued a ruling in favour. The obstruction came from a guild defending its livelihood, with armed backing, which is an economic interest wearing whatever clothes were available. And the one restriction actually imposed fell on religious texts, which is precisely the domain in which the interpreter class's monopoly lay: the state and the jurists between them were content for Turkish subjects to read dictionaries, histories, geographies and military treatises in a thousand copies, and not the Quran.

Reading information against the framework

The card holds that the trusted-information position is structural — never created and never abolished, only occupied, crowded, or captured — and that a project which destroys an interpreter class merely vacates a position that then refills, often more captured than before. This case requires a fourth disposition and supplies a discipline.

The fourth disposition is subcontracting. Where an apex appoints the head of a community, specifies in the appointment his authority over its members, enforces his rulings with its own force, holds him answerable for the community's obedience and revenue, and retains the power to remove him, that apex has no need of a censorship apparatus of its own and will not build one. The policing is performed inside the community, in its own language and script, by men who have doctrinal reasons of their own for performing it thoroughly and whose tenure depends on the results. **The diagnostic is not the presence of a censor's office but the existence of an appointment document — ask what powers it confers, who may withdraw it, and what the appointee is expected to report.** Subcontracting is distinct from crowding, which is a genuine plurality of hands that check one another, and distinct from capture, which is one hand holding the position directly; it is a single hand holding several positions at one remove, and from underneath it can be indistinguishable from liberty. The Orthodox peasant of Bulgaria enjoyed a church, a liturgy and a clergy the sultan never interfered with, and the reason the sultan never interfered was that he had appointed the man at the top of it and could depose him in an afternoon.

And the discipline follows from the printing case, which is this collection's clearest instance of a documentary silence being filled from outside. Two firmans that no one has ever seen have furnished three centuries of historians with the central

fact of Ottoman intellectual history, and the earliest such order that does survive is a permission. The rumour begins in a French chapter about Gutenberg, is taken up by Ottomans of the nineteenth century explaining their own predicament, and is finally certified by modern scholarship. **A suppression that consists of not building something leaves no evidence, and an instrument that counts acts will find nothing there; so where the record is silent, ask who filled the silence, and what they were explaining, and to whom.** Applied to this corpus generally, the rule cuts both ways: an order's absences are as likely to have been furnished by its enemies as its presences are to have been furnished by itself.

Finally, one thing compounds rather than adds. This study has now found the same boundary three times in three different instruments. Formation was withheld from the conquered and imposed on the Turcomans. Surveillance was absent among the Balkan Christians and produced name-lists among the Kızılbaş. Censorship was subcontracted to the non-Muslim communities and exercised directly, with executions, over Muslim doctrine. Three apparatuses, one line, in the same place each time. **The formation, the watching and the silencing are not three instruments but one instrument with three faces, and it appears exactly where a belief is being installed and is absent exactly where none is being asked for.** Which is why an empire that ruled more Christians than Muslims for much of this period could leave them almost entirely alone, and why doing so was not a policy of tolerance but a consequence of never having wanted anything from them that belief supplies.

A note on sources. The central argument of the first half of this module is Kathryn Schwartz's, in "Did Ottoman Sultans Ban Print?" (*Book History*, 2017), and it is credited to her throughout and quoted only in short compass: that the firmans of Bayezid II and Selim I have never been seen by anyone, that both sultans held printed European books in their libraries, that the earliest extant order concerning print is Murad III's of 1588 surviving at the back of the 1594 Roman Arabic edition of Euclid, that the rumour of a ban originates with André Thevet's chapter on Gutenberg printed at Paris in 1584, and that it was adopted by nineteenth-century Ottomans and stabilised by twentieth-century historians. The date of Murad's firman is given as 1587 in some accounts and 1588 in others; the discrepancy is noted and not resolved. Marsigli's refutation is reported as it appears in the discussion of Schwartz's article rather than from his own text. The Metaxas press follows Nil Pektaş's thesis on the first Greek printing press in Constantinople for the chronology, Evro Layton's article for the printer, and the specialist literature on the Jesuit reaction for the diplomatic background; the attribution of the confiscation to the French ambassador's instigation is reported in the literature as an allegation and is given here as such, not as established.

The printer's self-censorship in the editing of *Against the Jews* is from the study in *The Library*. On the patriarchal appointment the module follows the modern work on the berats — Hasan Çolak and Elif Bayraktar-Tellan on the Orthodox Church as an Ottoman institution, and Tom Papademetriou's argument that the hierarchy was regarded primarily as a tax-farming apparatus — and explicitly declines the older ethnarch account, which projects a nineteenth-century system backwards onto the fifteenth; where that older account is quoted it is marked as the received version. The directive inviting the Greek community to nominate a patriarch who would report the ill-wishers among them is a nineteenth-century document, later than this study's period, and is used only as a late and unusually candid formulation of a practice the berats imply; no earlier text of comparable frankness has been found and none should be assumed. Müteferrika's press follows the standard accounts: the conditions of the 1727 authorisation, the fetva of Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, the sixteen endorsements, the output of seventeen works in twenty-three volumes by 1743 in editions of five hundred to a thousand, and the prohibition on religious printing until 1803. The account attributing the press's later suppression to the copyists' guild with janissary backing is an eighteenth-century European report, is quoted as such, and carries all the limitations of an outsider's explanation of an Ottoman decision — which is, given this module's subject, a caution worth stating twice. Molla Kabız's trial and execution in 1527 and the kadızadeli movement are given from the reference literature without quotation; the Kızılbaş lists of 1512–14 are as established earlier in this study.

LET ACTION BE TAKEN ACCORDINGLY

Module 8 · elite coordination and the default — the chain audited link by link, from the throne down to the provincial magnate; how an arrangement in which every man defended his own position thereby defended the whole; and the dated moment at which each link stopped benefiting and began defending something else

What is actually being audited

A hierarchy that lasts is not one whose members agree with one another. It is one in which each man, pursuing his own advantage from where he stands, thereby holds up the arrangement — so that the whole is defended by people who need not like each other, coordinate on nothing, and intend nothing in common. Nobody has to be loyal. Everybody has to be better off inside than outside.

That is the property this module measures, and it is measured by asking one question at every link in the chain: *if this arrangement collapsed tomorrow, would this man be better or worse off?* Where the answer is worse, he defends it without being told to. Where the answer changes to better — where a group that has standing and means stops benefiting from the arrangement as it stands — the same self-interest that held the thing up begins pulling it apart, and that is where fracture comes from.

The Ottoman chain runs from the sultan through the grand vizier, the household troops, the learned hierarchy, the provincial cavalry, the governors and, later, the provincial magnates. This module walks it, and dates each answer.

The apex: a succession problem solved twice, and badly both times

The Ottoman house had no rule of succession. Princes were sent out to govern provinces from about the age of twelve, and the one who reached the capital first when his father died became sultan. That arrangement had already produced the empire's near-destruction once, in the eleven-year civil war among Bayezid I's sons after the disaster at Ankara.

Mehmed II's answer is the most notorious clause in Ottoman law and it should be read exactly. "Of any of my sons that ascends the throne, it is acceptable for him to kill

his brothers for the common benefit of the people (*nizam-i alem*). The majority of the ulema have approved this; let action be taken accordingly."

Three things in twenty-eight words. It does not create a rule of succession — the law formulated that the prince who was luckiest and strongest could take the throne and eliminate the brothers who might claim it, which leaves the contest exactly where it was and legislates only about the aftermath. It grounds itself on the order of the world rather than on dynastic right. And it cites the jurists: the apex's most brutal instrument is introduced with a note that the learned have licensed it, by a sultan who did not need their permission and took the trouble to record that he had it.

It was applied. Selim I, having won the civil war, executed his brothers Korkud and Ahmed in 1513 along with their sons, neutralising more than a dozen potential challengers. Mehmed III, on his accession, had nineteen brothers and half-brothers strangled in one night.

Read from the position of anyone below the throne, this looks entirely different from how it reads as a moral fact. A vizier, a corps commander, a provincial governor or a chief jurist facing a disputed succession must choose a side, and choosing wrong costs him his life, his family and everything he holds — because everything he holds is held from whoever wins. The eleven-year interregnum had shown every stratum in the empire what that costs. A law guaranteeing that exactly one candidate will be alive by the end of the week removes the single most dangerous decision any of them would ever have to make. **The fratricide clause is not merely a dynastic device; it is insurance sold to the coordinating class**, and it is a large part of why an empire that never had a succession rule also never, in six centuries, had a sultan replaced by anyone who was not an Ottoman.

Then the solution was changed, and the exchange is unusually clean. By the seventeenth century the *kafes* had emerged, in which princes were confined in restrictive palace quarters, often for decades, instead of being killed — the shift dating to Ahmed I in 1603. The bloodshed at each accession was traded away, and what was bought with it was a sequence of sultans who arrived on the throne having governed nothing and having in some cases spent most of their adult lives in confinement.

The consequence for the default is not the sultans' personal inadequacy but something structural. When the man at the apex stops actually deciding, the position of the person who does decide moves — to the grand vizier, to the queen mother, to the corps commanders. And every man below is now defending an arrangement whose real apex is no longer where the law says it is, which makes his calculation about who to please much harder and much more contested. **A succession rule is not only about**

who rules. It is about what the men beneath have to bet on, and the cage made the bet ambiguous for the first time.

The grand vizier: total authority, total liability

The second link held enormous power and owned nothing.

The office was conferred by entrusting the sultan's seal, and dismissal was announced by asking for the seal's return. The grand vizier was the sultan's absolute representative, controlling all appointments in the army and the administration — but he had no direct authority over two institutions: the Imperial Household and the Learned Profession.

Those two exclusions are the design. The vizier could command the empire and could not touch the sultan's own household or the men who interpreted the law — that is, he could not reach either the person he served or the body that could pronounce on the lawfulness of removing him. An office built that way is safe to fill with a man of unlimited ability.

And it was made safe a second time, at the other end. The Ottoman sultans routinely confiscated the wealth of elites; the distinctive features of the practice — *müsadere* — were its institutional longevity, running from about 1453 to 1839, and its targeting of fiscal and political elites rather than the merchants and creditors who were the usual targets elsewhere. Mehmed II confiscated his vizier's wealth immediately after the conquest of Constantinople, and the practice became a political tradition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; after 1695, as power provincialised and the domestic threat from provincial elites grew, its intensity increased. The office was always precariously held and very often ended in confiscation, exile or death.

So the audit question, asked of a grand vizier: if the arrangement collapsed tomorrow, would he be better or worse off? Catastrophically worse, and uniquely so, because he had no exterior. He held revenues he could not bequeath, an office that reverted, and an estate the treasury would take. He could not found a house; his sons could not inherit a faction; there was no landed base to retire to and no lineage to protect. **Everything he had was the arrangement, which is precisely why he defended it** — and why the sultan could safely give a man of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's ability more power than any European monarch ever gave a subject.

The mechanism had a price and it should be entered in the accounting. A confiscation regime threatening every successful official altered how the elite used money: they did not reinvest in long-term productive assets but diverted capital into pious foundations and liquid, hideable, portable goods — the foundations providing real social services and also acting as a capital sink that locked resources into non-

commercial uses to protect them from the state. A ruling class forbidden to transmit wealth converts it into endowments and jewels. That is a real economic consequence of a political device, and it is one of the clearest cases in this collection of a solution to the open problem being paid for out of the economy.

There was also a softer binding running alongside the hard one. Many viziers married daughters and sisters of the sultan and were thereafter called *damad*, bridegroom, acquiring rights to the revenues of vast estates and a standing matched only by the royal house — and some, like Süleyman's grand vizier İbrahim Pasha, executed in 1536, lost their lives when they overstepped in emulating the sultan. Kinship bound where property could not, and the ceiling was enforced by the same instrument as everything else.

The learned hierarchy: the link that was never inside the machine

The third link answered the audit question yes, and for a different reason from everyone above and below it — which is why it behaved differently.

The jurists and judges were free Muslims, not the sultan's property. Their houses were their own; their estates were not confiscated at death; and by the century after 1550 the highest among them formed a group whose sons inherited their standing. They were the one branch of the Ottoman ruling order that had an exterior.

They defended the arrangement, and thoroughly — they licensed the fratricide clause, they made the sultan's law compatible with God's, they ruled the state's wars lawful. But they defended it because it employed them, honoured them and left their families alone, not because they would have ceased to exist without it. A judge dismissed from office remained a man of property with a son in the profession. That distinction explains their conduct precisely: they refused individual requests, occasionally deposed sultans when others had already moved, and never once rose on their own account. **A link that can survive the arrangement's collapse is the most reliable in ordinary times and the least frightened in a crisis** — which is a useful and slightly counter-intuitive rule, and it is why the ulema were always in the room when a sultan came down and never the ones who put him there.

The corps: the link that rewrote its own terms

Here is the fracture, and it did not come from outside.

The design was exact and every element of it was a device. A janissary was taken as a child, cut from his family, converted, forbidden to marry, forbidden a trade, forbidden to leave the corps, paid a salary, and unable to transmit anything to anyone. The

purpose of all of it, read as position logic, was to ensure that his only asset in the world was his place in the corps, and that the only route to a better place ran through the sultan's favour. A man in that position defends the sultan absolutely, because the sultan is the sole source of everything he has and there is no second source anywhere.

Then, item by item, across roughly seventy years, the men holding those positions negotiated the constraints away.

Selim II gave the janissaries permission to marry in 1566, undermining the exclusivity of their loyalty to the dynasty — though some accounts place the first relaxation of the marriage ban earlier, under Selim I, with janissaries' sons, the *kuloğlu*, allowed to volunteer for service about a decade afterwards. On the fuller account, they obtained the right to marry under Selim II, and after the death of the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579 it was decided that their sons could be enlisted in the corps, creating the category of *kuloğlu*. Under Selim and Murad they were also permitted to work outside the corps in their off hours to earn money, which — unlike earlier janissaries — gave them a tie to the community; and as subjects increasingly resisted the child levy, those enforcing it drew recruits wherever they could find them, including from the Muslim population, so that the rule excluding Muslims had to be relaxed. Enrolment outside the levy began under Murad III, after which volunteers were taken, mostly of Turkish origin.

Now the decisive sentence, and it is the module's centre. From there on the child levy gradually declined *because the janissaries were not interested in it*, anxious as they were to arrange the enlistment of their own sons in the corps.

The state's entire recruitment system — the levy, the severance, the Turkish farmhouse, the palace school, the whole apparatus for manufacturing men with no exterior — was dismantled from inside, by its own products, without a decree, because every man in it had a son and preferred his own son to a stranger's child from Bosnia. Nobody rebelled. Nobody proposed a reform. Each janissary simply did what any father in his position would do, and the sum of those decisions destroyed the thing that had made them what they were.

When the levy was actually abandoned is not clear: the Ottoman chronicles contradict one another and historians do not agree, some following Hammer's view that it ended under Murad IV in 1639, others placing it in the middle or at the end of the century; one account has Mehmed IV abolishing it by 1683, by which time increasing numbers of Muslim Turkish families had already enrolled their own sons in hope of a lucrative career. The uncertainty is itself evidence: an institution that ends by decree has a date, and this one does not, because it was not ended. It was left behind.

What the corps became can be read in its size. The numbers grew from 20,000 in 1575 to 49,000 in 1591, fell to 17,000 in 1648, and rebounded to 135,000 by 1826. By the early seventeenth century the janissaries had enough influence to control the government, rebel, dictate to sultans, obstruct military modernisation and change sultans by palace coup; they became landowners and businessmen; and they admitted only the sons of former janissaries, who did not undergo the strict training, which lowered the corps's military quality.

Apply the audit question to this new creature and the answer has inverted. A slave of the Porte defends the sultan because the sultan is his only source. A member of a hereditary corporation drawing pay, holding a market stall, and expecting to enrol his son defends *the pay, the stall and the enrolment* — and the sultan becomes a threat to all three the moment he proposes to reform anything. From that point the corps behaves exactly as the audit predicts: it deposes Osman II in 1622 when he plans to replace it; it destroys Selim III in 1807 when he builds a new army; and on 15 November 1808 about a thousand janissaries raided the house of the grand vizier who had brought the reformers back.

The corps did not decay. It re-optimised, and it re-optimised in the direction every constrained group with standing and means will move if permitted: toward heritability.

The provincial links: the cavalryman, and the man who replaced him

The timariot answered yes for as long as two conditions held: that the survey was periodically remade, so that his grant was a live claim reviewed by a centre that could also reward him; and that his cavalry was still worth something on a battlefield. Both failed within a generation of each other, and the centre's own discipline finished the job. When Kuyucu Murad Pasha ordered, after the campaign of 1596, that every cavalryman absent from the roll be hunted down as a deserter and his land confiscated and redistributed to court favourites, an entire stratum discovered in a single order that the arrangement had stopped being worth defending — and the men who had been the empire's army became the core of the bandit armies that emptied Anatolia.

Then the state manufactured a new provincial link, and manufactured it deliberately, by selling revenue streams for lifetimes and then in shares. The devolution empowered notable families — the Karaosmanoğulları at Izmir, the Caniklizades at Trabzon — into hereditary positions and de facto regional rulers, who could recruit up to a hundred thousand irregulars during the Russian war of 1768–74; the scholarly

reading is that the empire's survival came to depend on co-opting these entrepreneurial elites rather than on enforcing an anachronistic absolutism. And when Selim III began his New Order army reforms from 1793, the notables of Anatolia and Rumelia resisted by allying with the janissaries and the ulema, seeing the reforms as a threat to their revenues and influence — an opposition that fed the provincial unrest culminating in 1807.

There is the audit's answer at the end of the chain: the three most powerful strata beneath the throne — the household troops, the provincial magnates and part of the learned hierarchy — combined against the sultan, not out of shared conviction but because a single reform threatened each of their positions separately. That is the default running in reverse. The same mechanism that had held the empire up for two centuries, each man defending his own, now dismantled it, each man defending his own.

Classifying the case, and tracking the drift

The framework's menu of answers to the problem of servants who might become rivals names this empire as the type case of one family: prevention by outsider recruitment — do not let a rival class form from insiders at all, recruit the administrative and martial core from outside the population that could supply one, and deny even them the ability to pass their position to their sons.

That classification is right for roughly 1450 to 1600 and it was never pure. Three instruments ran together. Prevention proper: the child levy, the non-heritable revenue grant, the confiscation of a servant's estate. Co-optation by kinship, running alongside it throughout: viziers married to the sultan's daughters and sisters, bound by marriage where they could not be bound by property. And a third that the framework should note, because this case shows it doing real work: **prevention applied not to a class but to the dynasty itself** — the fratricide clause, which prevents the formation of rival claimants inside the ruling house by the same logic that the levy prevents the formation of a rival aristocracy outside it. The Ottomans applied the same instrument to their own family that they applied to their servants, which is unusual and is part of why the family survived.

Then the classification drifts, and the drift is the collapse's mechanism rather than its symptom. From 1695 the state sells lifetime rights to collect; from the 1770s it sells tradable shares in them; and by the 1780s it faces a provincial class holding heritable revenue by purchase. The empire has moved from prevention to co-optation without ever deciding to, one auction at a time, and the consideration it is now buying is not armed service on demand but the absence of open revolt.

The document that states the failure

The terminal condition of the Ottoman default was written down and signed.

On 28 July 1808 Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, notable of Rusçuk, entered the palace at the head of an army, failed to save the deposed reformer Selim III, deposed his successor and enthroned Mahmud II — becoming the first provincial notable to reach the grand vizierate; and his most significant act in that office was the preparation of the Deed of Agreement, discussed in the presence of many notables from Rumelia and Anatolia invited to the capital for the purpose, and aimed at securing provincial support for the new sultan and for the planned military reforms. It was signed on 29 September 1808.

Its terms, as the reference literature gives them: the notables promised to show respect to the sultan; to assign their military units to the sultan's army; to help protect the sultan's treasury; to obey the grand vizier's orders provided the orders were lawful; not to interfere in one another's spheres of influence; and to support the sultan against revolts. In return, the Porte legitimised the notables and their estates — and the estates were declared inheritable.

Read that last clause against the founding principle of the whole order. This was a state whose defining legal doctrine was that nothing within it could be inherited: not a revenue grant, not an office, not a vizier's estate, not a soldier's place. Every device this module has described exists to enforce that single proposition. In 1808 the sultan's government signed a document declaring provincial estates heritable, in exchange for loyalty it had once simply commanded, from men who had arrived in the capital with armies.

It lasted seven weeks. On 15 November 1808 the janissaries raided Alemdar's house and killed him; no subsequent grand vizier ratified the treaty, and the sultan — who had given it only half-hearted support and saw it as a challenge to his prestige — let it lapse. Mahmud never backed the man who had given him the throne and limited his power, not wanting to be indebted to him or forced to share his sovereignty.

The comparison with Magna Carta has been made often and the framework supplies a sharper way to test it: count the constituencies with standing who would lose by a breach at the moment of the grant. Here there were two — the provincial notables, and a grand vizier who was himself one of them. Seven weeks later the second was dead and the first had nobody at the centre. A liberty with two beneficiaries and no institution connecting them to the apex is not a constitution; it is an alliance, and alliances end when a principal dies. That is why the Deed did not become a settlement, and it is a cleaner demonstration of the counting rule than most cases in this collection provide.

Reading the default against the framework

The framework's expectation is that structural change comes from inside the hierarchy — fracture, exhaustion, conquest, or an unabsorbed surplus of claimants — and not from the rising of the ruled. This case confirms it with unusual precision, because the Ottoman order gave the ruled a title, a court and a road to the throne and was still taken apart from the middle. What it adds is a mechanism and a way of dating it.

The contribution is this: every link that acquires the power to transmit its position to its sons thereafter defends the transmission rather than the arrangement. This empire is the ideal test, because its whole architecture rested on the opposite proposition, and it therefore failed in exactly the same way at every level, in the same direction, at different dates. The learned hierarchy consolidated into a nobility of the law between about 1550 and 1650 — first, because it was the one stratum whose property and descent had never been inside the machine. The household corps followed: marriage from 1566, sons enrolled from 1579, outsiders taken from the 1570s, the levy abandoned somewhere between 1638 and 1683 because the men it fed preferred their own children. The provincial magnates came last and by purchase, from 1695, and had their estates declared heritable by treaty in 1808. Three strata, one movement, one direction.

So the audit acquires a date-stamp and a general form. **Ask of any stratum in any hierarchy when it acquired heritability, and you have dated the moment its answer to the audit question changed** — because a man whose position ends with him defends the source of that position, and a man who can leave it to his son defends the inheritance, and those two things only coincide while the source is secure. When they diverge, the second wins, and it wins without conspiracy, announcement or intent.

Two things compound rather than add.

The first concerns the apex. The fratricide clause reads to a modern eye as the cruellest thing in this study and functioned as the most reassuring: it guaranteed the coordinating class that no member of it would ever have to choose a side. Its replacement removed the killing and removed the sultan's competence with it, moving the real apex somewhere unwritten and making every calculation below it harder. **A succession rule should be assessed not only by what it does to the family but by what it does to the bet every servant has to place**, and the Ottoman exchange of 1603 is the clearest instance available of that second effect being purchased without anyone noticing they were buying it.

The second closes the spine this study has followed from the beginning. The founding problem was where soldiers come from and what to pay them with; the answer, arrived at by stages, was to take them from the empire's own subjects' children and to pay them in claims that could be withdrawn. Both halves of that answer were undone by the same movement. The claims became property, sold for cash the wars demanded. And the supply of children stopped, not by decree, but because the men produced by the levy had sons of their own and wanted them enrolled instead. **The machine for making men with no exterior was switched off by the men it had made, the moment they acquired one.**

A note on sources. The fratricide clause is quoted from Mehmed II's *Kanunname-i Al-i Osman* in the English rendering used across the reference literature and given in Ekrem Buğra Ekinci's study of fratricide in Ottoman law; the manuscript tradition of the code is seventeenth-century and the authenticity of individual clauses has been questioned in the scholarship, which is a caution this module records rather than resolves, since nothing here depends on the clause being Mehmed's own words rather than a later codification of his practice. The applications — Selim I in 1513, Mehmed III's nineteen brothers — are as the standard accounts give them; the transition to confinement is dated to Ahmed I in 1603 in the reference literature and was gradual in practice. On the grand vizierate, the conferral and return of the seal and the two exclusions from the office's authority follow the general accounts; on *müsadere* the module follows Yasin Arslantaş's work, whose findings on the practice's longevity from about 1453 to 1839, its targeting of fiscal and political elites rather than merchants, and its intensification after 1695 are the load-bearing claims, together with the recent *Past & Present* study of confiscation as governance for the period 1750–1839. The observation about capital diverted into endowments and liquid assets is a widely made argument about Ottoman economic development and is reported here as an argument, not as an established quantity. The janissary chronology is the most contested material in this module and is given with its disputes intact: the permission to marry is dated to Selim II in 1566 by most accounts and to Selim I by some; the enrolment of sons after Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's death in 1579 follows Evgeni Radushev, whose finding that the levy declined because the janissaries themselves preferred to enrol their own sons is the single most important claim in the module and is credited to him; the abandonment of the levy is reported as genuinely uncertain, with 1639, mid-century and 1683 all in the literature and the Ottoman chronicles themselves in contradiction. The corps's size figures — 20,000 in 1575, 49,000 in 1591, 17,000 in 1648, 135,000 in 1826 — are those given in the reference literature and should be treated as orders of magnitude drawn from pay registers that were themselves being falsified by the later

dates. On the notables the module follows the modern scholarship on the *ayan* as an adaptation rather than a symptom, and the figure of a hundred thousand irregulars in 1768–74 is reported as given. The terms of the Deed of Agreement are as the reference literature summarises them, and the summary rather than the Ottoman text has been used, which is a real limitation for a document whose exact wording carries the argument; a study with access to the original would want to check the inheritance clause in particular. The date is given as 29 September 1808 for the signing, with 7 October reported for its presentation to the sultan for approval and 29 October appearing in some accounts; the discrepancy is noted and not resolved. Alemdar's death on 15 November 1808 and the treaty's lapse are as the standard accounts give them.

THE SUBSTANCE BELONGS TO GOD

Module 9 · plurality or foreclosure — an empire with no assembly, no estates, no chartered town and no legal person; the four real protections that existed anyway; which factional quarrel inside the hierarchy each one is the residue of; and the test of which held and which were words

What was not there

Begin with the absences, because they are total and because everything else in this module has to be measured against them.

There was no representative institution of any kind in the Ottoman Empire at any point in this study's period. No estates, no diet, no parliament, no cortes. No chartered town holding privileges by a document its burghers could produce in court. No guild with political standing, whatever its economic weight. No independent judiciary — the judges were the sultan's appointees, trained in schools the state built, promoted through a hierarchy the state controlled, and removable by it. No press until 1727, and none permitted to print a religious text until 1803. No noble order with a recognised right to be consulted. Nothing that could summon the ruler, refuse him a tax, or hold him to a promise.

Beneath all of that sits a deeper absence, and Timur Kuran's argument about it is the most useful thing said on this subject: Islamic law recognised no corporation — no "legal person", no entity distinct from the natural persons composing it, capable of holding rights and duties in its own name. A liberty needs a body to hold it. A charter is granted to a town, a privilege to a guild, a franchise to a company, an immunity to a college — and the body outlives the men who won it, which is what makes the right a right rather than a favour. The Ottoman order had no such bodies, so there was nothing for a permanent right to be lodged in.

This is foreclosure by architecture rather than by repression, and it is the more complete of the two. Nobody was imprisoned for demanding an assembly, because nobody demanded one. The category did not exist to be suppressed. Where a European ruler faced institutions he had to circumvent, buy or crush, the Ottoman sultan faced none, and the reason is not that he had crushed them.

So the honest first answer to the question this module asks is: there was no liberty in the sense of a right held against the state by an institution the state did not own. Not at any point, anywhere in the empire, for anyone.

And yet the protections were real

And yet what this study has already documented is not nothing.

The cultivator held a registered, heritable title enforceable in a court that took his fee and gave him a paper. He could sue the man who took his tithe. He could go over that man's head to the Imperial Council, and the record shows people of no standing whatever — including non-Muslim women from a Balkan town — travelling to Istanbul to do it. The non-Muslim kept his own clergy, calendar, schools and community law. The jurist owned his house and his sons inherited his standing. The merchant, by the eighteenth century, could purchase his way out of Ottoman jurisdiction altogether. These are real constraints on real power, they were used, and any account that dismisses them as rhetoric is wrong.

The question is where they came from, and the answer is the same in every case, which is why the module can be written at all. **Not one of these protections was created by the people who chiefly benefited from it.** Each is the residue of a quarrel inside the hierarchy, or a grant the apex made for its own purposes and afterwards could not withdraw. Nobody below the ruling class ever bargained for anything. What happened instead is that factions with standing and means fought each other, and settlements were struck, and other people were later found to be standing on them.

Four of these deserve to be traced, and they behave very differently.

The cultivator's rights, which were the throne's weapon against its own cavalry

The protections surrounding the Ottoman peasant were not a concession to peasants. They were an instrument.

Uriel Heyd's finding on the penal codes is that they were framed to protect the common people against oppressive officials and fief-holders as much as against criminals. The right to petition over a lord's head is a right to complain about a lord. The registered heritable tenure gave the man who ploughed the ground a better title than the man who drew its revenue — which, in a settlement whose entire architecture existed to prevent the cavalry from becoming a landed nobility, is exactly what the throne wanted.

Ask who had the standing and the means to obtain this, and the answer excludes the beneficiary entirely. The villager wanted it and could not have got it; he had no assembly, no charter, no organisation, and no leverage of any kind. The sultan wanted it, because a cavalryman free to squeeze his villages accumulates a following, a base and eventually a house, and there were three centuries of Turco-Persian precedent showing exactly where that ends. **The cultivator got a court because his lord needed watching.**

Which supplies the test that matters, and this liberty fails it. **A protection granted as a weapon against a third party lasts as long as the third party is worth attacking.** When the timariot ceased to be militarily or fiscally important and the tax farmer replaced him, nothing was repealed — the codes stood, the courts sat, the right to petition remained. But the man now extracting had bought his right at auction for cash the treasury had already spent, and the centre's interest in restraining him had inverted. The paper protections outlived the political interest that had created them by more than a century, and were correspondingly worth less each decade.

The substance belongs to God

The most durable protection in the whole case was not designed as a protection at all.

The Ottoman definition of the *vakıf* is precise: to prevent the giving and taking possession of a thing, so that the substance belongs to God while its benefits pertain to mankind — revenue-bearing property withdrawn from commercial transaction and made inalienable for a beneficent end, taken out of the condition of private ownership, the property said to belong to God and its revenue assigned to a religious or charitable purpose.

In an empire where the sovereign held the bare ownership of the arable land, where a servant's estate reverted at his death, and where confiscation of the wealthy was a standing instrument of government, that formula was the only door out. A man transferred the ownership of his property to God, appointed himself and then his descendants as its administrators and beneficiaries, and registered the deed before a judge. The property was thereafter inalienable, unseizable, and outside the market — and the income went to his children.

The state understood perfectly what was happening, and said so as soon as it wanted the practice stopped. Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals in the nineteenth century argued that family foundations were inconsistent with Islamic inheritance law, served to circumvent confiscation, and placed an economic burden on society. Ömer Lütfi Barkan's assessment, made in 1940, is that family foundations were a kind of insurance

and a bulwark against confiscation — a solution found by wealthy landowners against the state's tendency to seize. And the behaviour it produced is visible in the aggregate: a confiscation regime threatening every successful official pushed the elite away from long-term productive investment and into pious foundations and portable assets, the foundations providing real services and also acting as a capital sink.

Now apply the framework's counting rule at the moment such an endowment was made, and the result explains its durability better than any account of Ottoman piety. Who had standing and would lose by a breach? The founding family, obviously. The jurists — who administered endowments, adjudicated their disputes, drew salaries from them, and were themselves the largest single class of founders. And the beneficiaries of the charitable half: the soup kitchen, the mosque, the school, the hospital, the bridge, and the quarter that depended on them. Three constituencies, and one of them was the body of men who would have had to rule the seizure lawful.

That predicts something close to unbreakability, and it delivered. Mehmed II's general seizure of endowments in the 1470s, run by a chancellor who told a scholar to his face that the endowments were invalid and therefore abolished, was reversed within months of the sultan's death, and no Ottoman ruler attempted a general confiscation of endowments again for three and a half centuries.

That is what a liberty looks like in an order which has foreclosed by architecture. Not a charter, not a right, not a statute — **a devotional instrument used for a purpose it was not designed for, tolerated because refusing it would have cost the ruler more than allowing it did.** And the price it carried is the one Kuran identifies: because there was no corporation, the endowment had to do the corporation's work, and it did that work in a form that could not be wound up, reorganised or turned to new purposes when circumstances changed.

The fight of 1545, and what a factional victory leaves behind

The clearest available picture of how such an arrangement actually gets made is a quarrel between two jurists over a technical question of endowment law.

Cash endowments — money endowed, lent at a return, the return funding a charitable purpose — had become the empire's principal credit institution. Their legality was disputed because the classical doctrine required the endowed thing to be immovable property, and because lending at a return raised the prohibition on usury.

The practice, which had been treated as lawful within the Ottoman system, was banned by Süleyman in the middle of the sixteenth century at the request of Çivizade, then chief justice of Rumelia. But the sultan reversed his own decision after a short time, because it had caused serious unrest among the senior jurists and in society, and

in 1548 issued a new order stating that cash endowments were free to be made as before. The instrument was unavailable between 1545 and 1547; Çivizade's justification for the ban was that the conditions of validity did not hold for a cash endowment, and that it risked usury. Süleyman's decree of 1548 lifting the ban did not evade the objection but raised the question of usury directly and framed it in specific terms. Ebussuud defended the practice on the ground of established custom; the dispute drew treatises for and against from most of the significant jurists of the age — İbn Kemal, Çivizade, Fenarizade, Sofyalı Bali, Ebussuud, Birgivi — with the sultan's own decrees settling the choice between them.

Nothing in that episode is a grant of liberty and nobody in it was asking for one. Two factions of the interpreter class fought over a rule; the chief justice won at court and had the practice banned; the senior jurists and the affected public pushed back; the sultan reversed himself; and a legal instrument that financed lending across the empire for the next three centuries was thereby secured.

The residue of a factional fight is durable in proportion to how many people are found to be standing on it afterwards. In 1545 the cash endowment was a contested doctrine defended by one faction of scholars. By 1600 it was the ordinary credit mechanism of a dozen provinces, with borrowers, lenders, administrators, judges and charities all depending on its validity — and no sultan attempted to revisit it. The liberty was not in the decree. It was in the number of parties who would have been ruined by its withdrawal.

The protection nobody in the empire asked for

The fourth case is the strangest, because its original beneficiaries were not Ottoman subjects at all.

The capitulations granted to foreign powers were instruments of state, not concessions to anyone inside. A community of foreign merchants in a city could constitute itself under a consul recognised by an imperial patent making him the representative of his nation, empowered to settle disputes, supervise affairs and collect a fee; and the patent granted personal immunity and exemption from taxes to the consul and his household, and allowed him to call on Ottoman authority to enforce his decisions. The privileges — protection from harassment, exemption from local jurisdiction and taxation, and a lower customs rate than Ottoman subjects paid — were extended to the consuls' interpreters and a limited number of local employees.

Then it leaked, and the leak became a torrent. Consuls began requesting more patents for non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, mainly merchants rather than translators; the rights granted to these *beratlı* were considered to amount to a change of

nationality; and by the nineteenth century there were many thousands of them. The appointment of these men as interpreters was a farce: honorary dragomans did not live at their place of assignment and usually did not know the language of the nation whose patent they held, and ambassadors invented fictitious consulates to increase the number of patents they could issue. The commercial value was concrete — non-Muslim Ottoman subjects paid five per cent ad valorem customs, Muslims four, and Europeans three under the capitulations. Prices for the patents were high and varied by country; agents acquired several at once to widen their legal options and exploited them by strategic switching between courts; and by the early 1800s patent-holders had driven other groups out of European-Ottoman trade.

What a subject bought with such a patent was the one thing nothing else in the empire could supply: a lawful exit from the sovereign's own courts and taxes, held by a man who remained the sultan's subject.

And the state could not get it back. By the end of the eighteenth century the Porte made several futile attempts to suppress the sales and to prevent patent-holders from engaging in trade, manufacture, tax farming or guilds. In 1806 the government ordered every one of them to give up his patent or return to the place of residence named in it; about thirty Russian, French and Austrian protégés complied, fearing reprisal, and paid all the taxes accumulated since they had acquired their patents. Others petitioned for naturalisation by the government that protected them.

Read that last sentence twice. The sultan ordered his subjects to surrender a foreign privilege, and a number of them responded by applying to stop being his subjects. The Porte then tried to compete on price, issuing patents of its own at fifteen hundred to two thousand kuruş, evidently below the prevailing European prices; by 1806 five or six had been sold, and by 1815 there were a hundred and fifty-one imperial patentees — a modest showing against the European corps, and the reform failed to inspire confidence.

A state bidding for the allegiance of its own merchants, and losing on price.

Counted at the moment of grant, this liberty had no domestic constituency whatever: the beneficiaries were foreign crowns. It became a subject protection by leakage, and what held it in place was not any Ottoman interest but the fleets of the powers that issued it. That is precisely why it was the most complete legal protection available anywhere in the empire and also the most corrosive of it: it was genuine, it was purchasable, and it was answerable to nobody inside.

The communal jurisdiction, and a correction to the counting rule

The fifth case is the one usually cited as the empire's great liberty, and this study has already established what it actually was.

The head of each non-Muslim community held his position by a patent from the sultan, which specified his authority over his clergy, the management of his community's properties, the application of its own law to its members, and the right to collect taxes. Count the parties who would lose by a breach at the moment of the grant. The hierarchy gained a jurisdiction and an income. The state gained a tax collector and a disciplinary agent it did not have to pay for. Both would have lost by a breach, which on the framework's rule predicts durability — and the arrangement duly outlasted the child levy, the revenue grant, the household corps and very nearly the empire.

But the modern work on these patents shows that the state regarded the hierarchy primarily as a revenue farmer, and that the jurisdictional grandeur was acquired afterwards rather than granted at the outset. Which forces a correction to the counting rule and it is the module's second contribution. **Count not only how many parties would lose by a breach, but whether one of them is the apex itself.** Where the ruler is a beneficiary, the arrangement is maximally durable and minimally useful as a liberty, because it cannot be appealed to against him — it is not a limit on his power but a division of his labour. The Orthodox peasant's church, his priest and his community court were secure for four centuries and were secure precisely because the sultan was being paid for them.

The in and the out

One line ran through this society and it was marked by a document. The exempt served; the taxed paid; and a man crossed from the second to the first by receiving a patent, which is to say by being written into a book by an authority that could also write him out. There was no third condition.

Two routes under the line are documented and both are individual. A man could render a service the state wanted and be enrolled. Or, if he was a non-Muslim merchant with capital, he could buy a foreign patent and stand outside the line altogether.

What never happened is as instructive as what did. No Ottoman town obtained a charter. No group of subjects acquired a standing right as a group by bargaining with the throne. No corporation was ever chartered because no corporation could exist in law. Every protection traced in this module was obtained by an elite faction for itself, by the apex for its own purposes against a rival, or by a foreign power for its merchants. **Nothing in this empire was ever won from below, and the reason is not that the**

people below were quiet — they had a court, a petition and a road to the capital, and they used all three. It is that they had no body in which a right could be lodged.

Reading plurality against the framework

The card holds that plurality is what an order looks like when violence, wealth and trusted information are not all captured by the same coalition, and that a liberty's durability is predictable at the moment of grant by counting the beneficiaries with standing. This case supplies one addition to the counting rule, one condition on it, and one finding about the form liberties take where no institution can hold them.

The finding is the module's contribution. Where an order has foreclosed by architecture — where no legal person exists that can hold a right, persist beyond its members and sue in its own name — protections do not disappear. They migrate into whatever form is available and are smuggled in under another description. In this empire the available form was the pious endowment, and the elite used a devotional instrument as a property-rights regime for four centuries: the substance to God, the income to one's sons, and the whole beyond the reach of a sovereign who could not seize it without attacking the law that made him lawful. **So the diagnostic in any foreclosed order is not to look for charters and find none, but to ask what existing institution is doing a liberty's work while wearing other clothes** — and then to ask who administers it, because that is who the real beneficiary constituency is. Here it was the jurists, which is why the shelter held.

The addition to the counting rule is that the identity of the beneficiaries matters as much as their number, and specifically whether the apex is among them. Where the ruler gains by the arrangement — the communal jurisdiction that farmed his taxes for him, the cultivator's court that restrained his cavalry — durability is very high and the protection is structurally incapable of being used against him. Where the apex is not a beneficiary, durability depends on how many outside parties are standing on the arrangement and what standing they have: the endowment held because three constituencies including the judiciary depended on it; the cash-endowment ruling held because a dozen provinces' credit rested on it; the compact of 1808 died in seven weeks because it had two beneficiaries and one of them was the other's patron.

And the condition is that a protection granted as a weapon has the lifespan of the quarrel that produced it. The Ottoman cultivator's rights were genuine, were used, and were the throne's instrument against its own provincial cavalry; they were not repealed and they did not survive, because the enemy they had been forged against was

superseded by a class the throne had itself sold to. This is the sense in which the question *was there liberty, or just rhetoric* has, in this case, a two-part answer. The protections were not rhetoric — they were enforceable, and people enforced them. But they were nobody's rights. They were the deposits left by fights among men with standing, and they lasted exactly as long as somebody with standing went on needing them.

A note on sources. This module makes an argument out of material established elsewhere in this study and adds four bodies of specialist literature. The absence of the corporation in Islamic law is Timur Kuran's argument and is credited to him; readers should know it is contested and that the module uses only its narrowest form — that no entity existed which could hold rights distinct from its members — rather than his wider claims about economic consequences. On the endowment, the Ottoman definition is quoted from a foundation's own statement of the classical formula; Ömer Lütfi Barkan's characterisation of family foundations as insurance and as a bulwark against confiscation dates from 1940 and is reported as his interpretation, which the recent literature debates rather than accepts wholesale; the nineteenth-century Ottoman bureaucratic complaint that family foundations circumvented confiscation is quoted because it is the state's own testimony against its own subjects' device. The cash endowment controversy follows Jon Mandaville's foundational article of 1979, together with the substantial later Turkish scholarship that has since recovered documents Mandaville did not have — in particular the 1548 decree lifting the ban, whose original has still not been found and which is known from two reported copies; the module's account of the dispute's course is therefore reported at one remove and the dating of the ban to 1545–47 is as the recent studies give it. The capitulations and the patent-holders follow Maurits van den Boogert's study of the capitulations and the Ottoman legal system and Cihan Artunç's work on the protégé system and on the price of legal institutions; the customs differentials of five, four and three per cent, the prices of imperial patents at fifteen hundred to two thousand kuruş, the order of 1806 and the count of a hundred and fifty-one imperial patentees in 1815 are all from Artunç and are given as he gives them. On the communal patents the module relies on the same modern work used earlier in this study — Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan on the patriarchal berats and Papademetriou on the hierarchy as a revenue apparatus — and continues to decline the received account of a tidy empire-wide system of confessional communities, which is a nineteenth-century construction. Heyd on the penal codes is as cited earlier. Finally a limitation that bears on the whole module: everything here about who obtained a protection and why is inference from the shape of the arrangement and the identity of its beneficiaries, not from any document in which a

party states its motive. No Ottoman said that the endowment was a device against confiscation until the state itself said so, three centuries later, when it wanted the device abolished — and that testimony, being an accusation, is not disinterested either.

THEIR CAULDRONS OVERTURNED

Module 10 · change and collapse — not the empire's end but the settlement's; how an apex destroyed its own conquest caste with artillery once it had built another army first; why the people appear in the sequence only as a crowd summoned under a banner; and the one case in which subjects did win, and the reason they won

Which order ended

The Ottoman Empire did not fall in 1826. It lasted almost another century, fought two more great wars, and was dissolved by a peace conference in the twentieth century.

What ended on 15 June 1826 was the settlement this study has been describing: the arrangement by which an army was obtained from the empire's own subjects' children, paid in claims that could be withdrawn, and held to the throne by having nothing outside it. The instrument that ended it was field artillery, fired by the sultan, at the barracks of his own household infantry. That is the change this module traces, and it is unusually clean, because the settlement's destruction has a date, a decree, and a casualty count.

The floor that had turned around

Establish first what the corps had become, because the change is unintelligible otherwise.

By the early seventeenth century the janissary corps had ceased to function as an elite military force and had become a privileged hereditary class, whose exemption from taxation made them highly unfavourable in the eyes of the rest of the population. Their number grew from 20,000 in 1575 to 135,000 in 1826, and many were not soldiers at all but still drew pay from the empire, the corps holding an effective veto over the state — and any sultan who tried to diminish its status or power was immediately killed or deposed.

Read that last clause against the framework's account of how a floor holds an order in place. The floor is the credible expectation of organised violence against a defector, written into every ledger in the realm at once, so that everyone independently concludes today is not the day to move. What had happened here is that the entry had reversed sign. The corps could reliably punish the sultan; the sultan could not reliably punish the corps. Osman II in 1622, Mehmed IV in 1687, Mustafa II in 1703, Ahmed

III in 1730, Selim III in 1807, Mustafa IV in 1808 — six sovereigns removed or killed by the men whose entire institutional existence had been designed to make them incapable of it.

The floor had turned around and was pointing at the man it was built to protect. That is the condition from which this module's change begins, and the framework's four cracks do not quite name it, because all four describe ways in which an enforcer's threat against *subjects* stops being credible. Here the subjects were never the problem. The apex was the party whose cost column had emptied.

An apex in that position cannot reform. Every proposal is read by the force as an attack upon it, and the reading is correct, because it is one. Selim III demonstrated the point at the cost of his life: he built a new European-style corps from 1793 with its own separate revenues; in 1807 the household troops, the provincial notables and part of the learned hierarchy combined against him; the new army was destroyed, the sultan deposed and then murdered, and the reformers' champion who marched on the capital to avenge him was dead in his own house within four months.

So the precondition of destroying a praetorian guard is having another army first. Mahmud II spent eighteen years assembling one, and the record shows he understood the sequence exactly: by 1825 he seemed committed to eliminating the corps but, before provoking them, set about building alliances with the religious and other military establishments within the empire. His creation of a new artillery corps trained in Western methods escalated tensions.

What repriced the arrangement

The calculation that had held the corps in place for two centuries was not moral and did not change for moral reasons. It changed because the corps stopped delivering the one thing it was paid for, visibly, in a war everyone was watching.

In 1821 Greek nationalists revolted. By 1825 a stalemate had developed: the Greeks were unable to drive the Ottomans out of most of Greece, and the Ottomans were unable to crush the revolt. The sultan broke the stalemate by persuading his technically vassal but practically autonomous viceroy of Egypt to deploy his Western-trained and equipped army and navy against the Greeks — an army the ruler of Egypt had built on European lines and which his son Ibrahim Pasha transported to Greece in 1825.

Contingents of janissaries were among the imperial troops that failed to put down the revolt, and their performance was blamed for the empire having to seek military help from the Egyptians.

That is the repricing, and it can be stated in a sentence. The sultan of the Ottomans had to hire a vassal's European-drilled army to suppress a rebellion inside his own

empire, because the corps that consumed a large share of his revenue could not do it — and every man in Istanbul could see it. On the apex's ledger the corps' benefit had gone to zero while its cost, in pay to a hundred and thirty-five thousand men of whom many were not soldiers, stood undiminished. What had been an expensive necessity became an expensive liability, and the moment that arithmetic was legible, the arrangement was over.

The event

The provocation was administrative and unmistakable. In May 1826 Mahmud II declared a new order under which the janissaries would be distributed throughout the military rather than concentrated in their own units. On 14 June the janissaries in Constantinople challenged him by assembling in the Hippodrome and demanding an audience to express their grievances. They revolted as expected on the night of 14–15 June, overturning their cauldrons and marching on the palace.

The sultan had ordered the artillery to assemble, and it opened fire. He unfurled the Prophet's sacred banner, rallying the populace against the rebels, and turned his guns on the barracks. The new artillery units drove the rebels back into a vast wooden barracks and followed with incendiary rounds that set the building alight; the fire destroyed the barracks and almost every man inside; the rebellion lasted less than three hours. Some four thousand died in the barracks, and more in the street fighting; the survivors fled or were imprisoned and their possessions were confiscated; by the end of the year the captured janissaries were beheaded at the Thessaloniki fort thereafter known as the Blood Tower. An eyewitness described the Sea of Marmara as mottled with dead bodies; smaller massacres followed at Vidin, İzmit and Edirne. Estimates for the number destroyed under the barrage run from about four to six thousand.

The decree came the following day and it is worth reading as a document rather than as an outcome. On 16 June Mahmud issued an imperial order abolishing the corps and branding its members traitors to the state and to Islam for rebelling against reform; it prohibited any future reference to the janissaries by name, ordered the destruction of their regimental cauldrons, and mandated the demolition or repurposing of their barracks in Istanbul and the provinces; and the dissolution was framed as a divine favour, endorsed by rulings from the jurists which retroactively justified the corps' elimination as necessary to restore military discipline and Ottoman sovereignty. The Bektashi dervish order associated with the corps was suppressed along with it.

Every instrument this study has traced appears in that paragraph, working for the last time in its classical form. The jurists supply the licence, after the fact, exactly as they

had licensed the fratricide clause three and a half centuries before. The sacred banner is produced, exactly as the frontier idiom of holy war had been produced. And the state names the event: *Vaka-i Hayriye*, the Fortunate Event, in Istanbul — and *Vaka-i Şerriyye*, the Unfortunate Incident, in the Balkans.

Historians have suggested that Mahmud deliberately incited the revolt, and have described the whole affair as the sultan's coup against the janissaries.

What was actually destroyed

A triumphalist reading is available and this module should refuse it, because there is a serious competing account and it changes the meaning of the event.

Against the story of a corrupt and backward military caste, an alternative historiography holds that it was the janissaries' economic and social links that brought about their destruction: they had become the entity representing the autonomous Ottoman classes — the artisans and the guilds — who had the most to lose from the elite's project of state modernisation.

Take that seriously and 1826 looks different. In an order that had never permitted a corporation, never chartered a town, and never seated an assembly, the corps had become the nearest thing to an autonomous body the empire possessed: armed, hereditary, tax-exempt, embedded in the trades of the capital through the stalls and workshops its members ran, and capable of stopping a sultan. It was, precisely because of everything that had gone wrong with it as an army, the last domestic institution with the means to refuse the centre.

So the destruction removed an obstacle to reform, which is what the decree says, and it also removed the only counterweight the capital contained, which the decree does not say. What followed confirms the second reading: the reforms that came after 1826 ran toward centralisation — the abolition of the tax farm, the reorganisation of the provinces, a salaried bureaucracy answering to Istanbul — and the empire after the settlement's end was more centralised and less plural than the empire before it. **This was a rupture that reloaded the same shape rather than a reform that released pressure**, and the shape it reloaded had one fewer body in it capable of saying no.

Where the common people appear

They appear twice, and both appearances are exactly what the framework predicts and neither is authorship.

In the capital they came out under the Prophet's banner on the sultan's side. That is not surprising and it is not evidence of enthusiasm for reform: the corps was tax-

exempt in a city where everyone else paid, drew salaries without serving, and had spent two centuries rioting. Turkish mobs killed the survivors in Constantinople, and many janissaries living outside the capital were eventually killed by local populations in spontaneous risings sanctioned by the government.

Note the phrasing in that last clause with care: risings which were *spontaneous* and *sanctioned*. Both words are true and they describe the framework's account of the crowd with unusual precision — real popular hatred, genuinely felt, released at the moment an elite faction found a use for it and gave permission. The people were the weight one faction swung.

Nowhere in the causal chain from 1793 to 1826 does a subject's decision enter as an author. The peasantry of Anatolia and Rumelia went on cultivating, paying and being registered, while the entire military and fiscal constitution under which they had lived for four centuries was destroyed by an artillery bombardment lasting less than three hours, arranged by men they had never seen.

The case where subjects did win

The honest test of the framework's claim is not 1826. It is the Greek revolt, because there a subject population rose against an intact floor and ended with a state — which is precisely the outcome the framework says does not happen.

The sequence has to be laid out exactly. The rising began in 1821; by 1825 the Greeks could not expel the Ottomans and the Ottomans could not crush the Greeks; the Greeks had fought for years with only a trickle of uncoordinated outside support, and the sultan, realising he needed help, turned to Egypt, whose European-trained army landed in the Morea in 1825; and thereafter the rebellion was being beaten. In the Treaty of London of 6 July 1827 Britain, France and Russia agreed to create a semi-independent Greek state under the sultan's supervision; the revolutionary government accepted the treaty despite the disappointment of most Greeks, and Ibrahim Pasha rejected it categorically. Faced with the prospect of a Greek defeat and reports of massacres, the allied powers each sent a naval squadron; on 20 October 1827 at Navarino the British, French and Russian ships under Admiral Codrington destroyed most of the Turkish and Egyptian fleet; the Turks evacuated Greece within ten months, and an independent kingdom followed in 1832.

Now read the causation. The Greek grievance was four centuries old and had not changed. The Greeks' courage and persistence had not changed; they had been fighting for six years. Their numbers had not changed. What changed was that three great powers decided, for reasons of their own — popular sympathy in Britain and France,

and Russia's traditional hostility to the Porte and sympathy for its Orthodox co-religionists — to end the war, and their admirals settled it in an afternoon at anchor.

A subject population rose against a working floor, was being crushed, and was rescued by a rival elite with fleets. That is the framework's claim in its strongest available form, and it is worth stating without any softening because the temptation to soften it is strong: the Greek achievement was real, was bought with enormous suffering, and produced a state that exists today.

And here the framework's own honest objection has to be entered at full weight, because this case is where it bites hardest. The Greeks' persistence was not causally irrelevant. It was the necessary condition of everything that followed, because it was what made intervention politically possible in London and Paris — six years of a rebellion that would not die, and reports of massacres, are what converted a diplomatic preference into three squadrons in the Ionian Sea. **A subject population's pressure operates by changing what an outside elite finds cheap, not by changing what the incumbent floor can do.** That is a genuine causal channel and it should be named as one. It is not agency in the sense the flattering story means, and it is not nothing.

Reading change against the framework

The card holds that structural change comes from fracture, exhaustion, conquest or an unabsorbed surplus of claimants, and never from the rising of the ruled; and that each of these is one event seen four ways — the emptying of the cost column, the moment the credible expectation of organised violence against a defector ceases to be credible in every ledger at once. This case confirms the claim and requires the card to name a configuration it has not yet named.

The contribution is that the cost column can empty for the apex rather than for the subjects, and this has a distinct signature and a distinct cure. All four documented cracks describe an enforcer whose threat against those below stops being credible. What this empire produced instead was an enforcing instrument that acquired an exterior — property, families, heritable places, market stalls, an economic base in the trades of the capital — and thereby acquired the capacity to price the *ruler's* defection instead of the subjects'. Six sultans deposed or killed by their own household troops in under two centuries is the measurement of it. **Call it the floor turning around**, and note the two things that follow. Such an apex cannot reform, because every reform is correctly read by the instrument as an attack on it, and the attempt costs the reformer his throne and usually his life. And the only exit is to build a second force in advance and then provoke the first into a rising that licenses its destruction — which means the diagnostic question in any case of this kind is not whether the ruler wanted

to be rid of his guard but whether he had somewhere else to stand. Selim III and Mahmud II wanted the same thing, proposed the same thing, and differed in that one variable.

Two things compound. The first is the corrective this module has already entered and it matters for the corpus, not only for this case. Where an order has foreclosed by architecture, so that no chartered body, assembly or corporation exists, whatever armed and privileged institution it does contain will drift into performing the functions of one — and its destruction will therefore remove a counterweight as well as an obstacle. That is why 1826 reloaded rather than reformed, and it is why the framework's distinction between the two should be tested by asking what institutions existed *after* the change rather than what abuses were ended by it.

And the second closes this study's spine. The empire's founding difficulty was where soldiers come from and what to pay them with. The answer was to take them from its subjects' children, sever them, form them, and pay them in claims that could be withdrawn — an army obtained at almost no expense to the treasury. Every subsequent difficulty in this study has been the working-out of that single answer: the levy stopped because the men it made preferred their own sons; the claims became property because the wars demanded cash and only property can be sold; and the force itself, once it had sons and property, stopped defending the throne and started defending its pay. In 1826 the state fired artillery at the last of it. **What was destroyed at Et Meydanı was not a corrupt militia but the final residue of the arrangement by which the Ottomans had solved their original problem** — and it was destroyed by a sultan who had solved it a different way, by paying for a European-drilled army with taxes, which is the answer every state around him had by then adopted and the answer his ancestors had spent four centuries avoiding.

A note on sources. The events of 14–16 June 1826 are unusually well recorded and unusually contested in their interpretation, and this module has tried to keep the two apart. The sequence — the distribution order of May 1826, the assembly at the Hippodrome, the overturning of the cauldrons, the artillery, the burning of the barracks, the abolition decree of 16 June with its prohibition of the corps' name and its destruction of the cauldrons, the fetvas justifying the act, the suppression of the Bektashi order, and the executions at Thessaloniki — follows the standard reference accounts, which rest ultimately on the Ottoman chronicler Es'ad Efendi's *Üss-i Zafer*, an official account written by the man who would become the state's first newspaper editor and therefore the least disinterested source imaginable. Casualty figures are given as a range, four to six thousand in the barracks with an unknown further number in the streets and provinces, and no total should be inferred: the state was counting men it

had just declared traitors and had every reason to report a number that flattered its decisiveness. The eyewitness description of the Sea of Marmara is quoted as the reference literature reports it, at third hand, and is impressionistic. The suggestion that Mahmud deliberately provoked the revolt is a historians' inference, reported as such. The competing historiography — that the corps was destroyed because it had become the armed representative of the autonomous urban classes rather than because it was militarily useless — is an important minority position and is given here at its full strength precisely because it cuts against the module's own narrative convenience; readers should treat the two accounts as complementary rather than exclusive. The size figures of 20,000 in 1575 and 135,000 in 1826 come from pay registers that were, by the later date, being falsified as a matter of course, and the second number is best read as the number of pay entitlements rather than of men. On the Greek revolt and Navarino the module follows the standard accounts; the Treaty of London of 6 July 1827, the composition of the fleets, and the battle of 20 October 1827 are not in dispute, though the question of whether Codrington exceeded his instructions is, and is not entered into here because nothing in the argument turns on it. Selim III's New Order and its destruction in 1807 are given from the reference literature in outline only, since the module needs them as a control case rather than as a subject. Finally, the framework claim this module is testing is the collection's own and the module was written to look for evidence against it; the Greek case is the strongest counter-evidence available and has been given its full weight rather than being resolved away.

THE LOAVES WERE COUNTED

Module 11 · the grim accounting — what the order cost while it stood and what it did that was worth doing; the dead of its founding, its maintenance and its end; the harms that leave no figure because nothing was built; and the question of who wrote every number in this module

What this empire counted

Begin with an asymmetry, because it governs everything that can honestly be said in this module.

The public kitchen founded by Hurrem Sultan at Jerusalem in the middle of the sixteenth century distributed around a thousand loaves of bread a day, and the records name who received them: the staff, the residents of the kitchen's caravanserai, the followers of a local Sufi master, and four hundred people characterised as "poor and wretched, weak and needy." At Mehmed II's complex in Istanbul, built between 1463 and 1471, approximately fifteen hundred people were fed twice a day by the mid-sixteenth century, and the register itemises them: visiting dignitaries, travellers, scholars and students of the Fatih colleges, the doorkeepers and guards of those colleges, the students of three further colleges and four nearby dervish lodges, six hundred student candidates and their eight proctors, fifty-six kitchen staff, forty-seven hospital staff, and fifty-one other functionaries of the complex. The endowments kept separate books for those entitled to cooked food, for those entitled to bread, for the kitchen's expenditure, and for the daily movements in and out of the cellar; Barkan published a complete annual balance sheet for the Süleymaniye mosque and kitchen for the year 1585–86.

This empire can tell you how many loaves left a Jerusalem kitchen on a given day in the 1550s, and to whom.

It cannot tell you, within a factor of two, how many children the child levy took across two centuries. The usual figure offered is several hundred thousand and the honest position is that the number is not securely known. No register survives that would settle it, and there is no reason to think one was ever compiled.

Both facts come out of the same archive, and the asymmetry is not sinister. It is structural, and naming the mechanism is the most useful thing this module does. **A gift creates an auditor and a taking does not.** An endowment is founded by a named person under a deed with conditions; the conditions have to be enforced against the administrators; the administrators must account annually; and the courts will hear a

complaint that the founder's terms are not being met. Every loaf therefore has a party with an interest in its being recorded. A levy has no founder, no deed, no beneficiary with standing, and nobody entitled to an account. So it is recorded as an administrative event and not as a quantity, and the quantity is lost.

The powerful leave paper and the powerless leave silence. In this case the paper is unusually good, which makes the silence unusually loud, and every figure below should be read against that.

The column that was paid

The framework requires the genuine coordination to be credited at full weight, and in this case it is substantial.

The most important item is negative and is easily missed because nothing happened. For roughly four centuries the Balkans and Anatolia were not fought over by rival lords. The society this conquest replaced was one of Byzantine civil war, Serbian and Bulgarian succession fragments, Latin lordships, Catalan mercenary companies operating on their own account, and an emperor pawning his crown jewels to pay soldiers. What followed was a single fiscal and legal authority across the whole space, with one currency, one supreme court of appeal, one law of land tenure, and roads that could be travelled.

Under it the cultivator held a registered heritable title, could sue the man who took his tithe, and could carry a complaint to the imperial council. This study has established all of that in detail and it does not need repeating except as an entry in this column, where it belongs: a peasantry with a defensible tenure and an accessible court is not a small thing in the sixteenth century, and by the standards of the countryside on either side of the Ottoman frontier it was unusual.

The charitable infrastructure was real and was extensive. The first such foundation is said to have been established by Orhan at İznik in 1336, and thereafter public kitchens became an integral part of the urban landscape of most Ottoman cities. They were never built alone but always within a complex, and they formed part of the empire's settlement and colonisation policy, appearing both in the city complexes and in the way-station complexes along the pilgrimage and trade routes. The Süleymaniye complex, built 1550–1557, contained a great mosque, several colleges of law, a hospital and kitchens distributing meals daily to thousands; the complex of Bayezid II at Edirne pioneered integrated medical education and the treatment of mental illness, combining pharmacology, music and hydrotherapy.

To these should be added the provisioning of a capital of several hundred thousand people by an administered supply system whose priority was abundance rather than

revenue; the reception in 1492 of a Jewish population that every western monarchy was expelling; and the safety of roads maintained by way-stations and by villages that policed the passes in exchange for tax relief.

And one further achievement, which is the largest and is structural rather than moral. In four centuries of ruling Orthodox, Armenian, Catholic, Jewish and several Muslim communities in the same space, this empire produced no war of religion. There is no Ottoman Thirty Years' War, no St Bartholomew's Day, no expulsion of a confessional population from the realm. That is an enormous fact and it should be credited without being sentimentalised, because this study has already established its cause: the state did not require the belief of the conquered, sought nothing from them that conviction supplies, and therefore had nothing to fight them about. The peace was real. Its source was indifference rather than tolerance, and the two are indistinguishable from underneath.

The column that paid

Now the other side, and it must be set out with the same care.

The founding conquests were sieges and field battles across three centuries and are not separately countable here. One of them can stand for the method, and the account is an Ottoman official's, which makes it evidence rather than accusation. Tursun Beg, writing of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, records that after the enemy was overcome the soldiers plundered the city, enslaving boys and girls and stripping the palace and the houses of the rich of gold and silver vessels, precious stones and fabrics, so that "every tent was filled with handsome boys and beautiful girls." The city was given to the troops for three days and the surviving civil population, on the order of thirty thousand, was largely enslaved.

The child levy ran for something over two centuries. Its total is unknown and this module will not invent one; what can be said is that it was a periodic levy of roughly one boy in forty households across the Christian provinces, that the boys were between about eight and eighteen, that they were converted and severed from their families by design, and that the parents of most of them dreaded it — which is established by the earliest surviving reference to it, a bishop's sermon of 1395 in which he tells his congregation that he shudders at the decree as at a fire too hot to approach. Set beside that, and not cancelling it, the equally documented fact that exemption from the levy was negotiated as a privilege in surrender terms and that some families tried to get their sons onto it.

The suppression of the Kızılbaş in 1512–14 produced lists of names compiled by provincial governors and executions or forced conversions following them. The

traditional accounts give the dead in tens of thousands; the figure is contested, rests on the chronicle tradition, and remains a live political question in Turkey. It is reported here as a range asserted rather than a quantity established.

The dynasty's own solution to succession killed princes as a matter of law — nineteen brothers and half-brothers strangled in a single night on one accession — and after 1603 confined them instead, some for decades, which traded the killing for a different kind of ruin.

The Celali decades at the turn of the seventeenth century emptied the Anatolian countryside. Registered taxpayers at Kayseri and Amasya fell by something approaching half. The deaths there are not countable at all, for reasons the next section takes up.

The destruction of the corps in 1826 killed some four to six thousand men in the barracks at Et Meydanı, more in the streets of the capital, and further numbers at Vidin, İzmit, Edirne, and by decapitation at Thessaloniki.

And the order's end in the Balkans, which must be entered on both sides of the same page or the accounting becomes a nationalist ledger. At Chios in 1822, of a population of a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousand, about four-fifths were killed, enslaved or driven out; the estimates run to twenty-five to fifty thousand killed and forty-five to fifty thousand enslaved, with ten to twenty thousand escaping as refugees. And a year earlier, over three days in September 1821, the insurgents killed something on the order of fifteen thousand Muslim, Jewish and Christian men, women and children at Tripolitsa — a figure some accounts put as high as thirty thousand. The pattern on the insurgent side was general: entire Muslim populations of the Morea and Thessaly were rounded up, marched out of town, and killed. And on the Ottoman side the Patriarch of Constantinople was hanged on Easter Sunday 1821 on a charge of implicating himself in the revolt, followed by the beheading of the chief dragoman and other prominent Christian Ottomans.

Both columns of that last paragraph belong to the same war and the same year, and any account that prints one without the other is not doing an accounting.

The metabolic test, and why this case has both poles

The framework's rule is that the mass death a collapse collects is proportional to how much life-sustaining coordination the order was performing — catastrophic where the coordination was the subsistence metabolism, near-bloodless where it was only governance. This case is unusually instructive because it supplies both extremes from the same empire.

The destruction of the janissary corps in 1826 was the end of the classical settlement and killed almost nobody outside the men in the barracks. The reason is that the coordination was somewhere else and was not touched. The courts sat the following week. The grain kept moving to Istanbul. The registers were kept, the tithes were collected, the endowments went on feeding people. An empire's central military institution — a hundred and thirty-five thousand pay entitlements, an armed corporation embedded in the trades of the capital — was annihilated in under three hours with no metabolic consequence whatever. **The trigger was the whole of it, and there was no kill.**

The Celali decades were the exact inverse. No institution was destroyed; the sultanate stood, the law codes stood, the corps stood, the judges sat. What failed was the metabolism: the coin lost its value, the soldiery went unpaid and turned to living off the districts, the courts stopped delivering, the extraordinary levy became permanent, and the peasantry abandoned the land. The dead of those decades cannot be counted, and the reason is exact and worth stating — the registers that would have counted them were fiscal registers of households in villages, and the event was the emptying of the villages. **The kill destroyed the instrument that would have measured it.**

So the two poles are: a spectacular event with a full count and no consequence, and a consequential event with no count at all. **The size of an event is a very poor guide to its cost, and the availability of a number is a worse one.**

The accounting in omissions

The framework instructs that where an order was cheap, the accounting must be conducted in omissions, because every instrument the method owns is built to register commissions and will return a null result where the harm is a thing not built.

This order was cheap and the omissions are large.

It ruled a Christian majority for much of the period and built that majority not one school. There was no attempt at formation, no literacy programme, no instruction of any kind, and the reason established earlier in this study — that the state needed the tithe and the poll-tax and not the belief — explains it without excusing the result, which is four centuries of a population left exactly where it was found.

It printed nothing in Turkish until 1727 and nothing religious until 1803, and this study has established that no sultan forbade it. There was no ban to lift and no villain to name. There was simply no market, no capital directed at building one, and a copyists' guild with armed backing that had every reason to prevent one. An omission

with no decree behind it is still an omission, and this one cost the empire the accumulated compounding of two and a half centuries of cheap text.

It never permitted a corporation, chartered a town, or seated an assembly, so nothing could accumulate in a body that outlived its members. The endowment did the corporation's work and did it in a form deliberately incapable of being reorganised or wound up. And the confiscation regime pushed elite capital out of productive investment and into endowments and portable goods — a real economic consequence of a political device, argued rather than measured, and entered here as an argument.

And the omission this study has traced from its first module: the governing class was manufactured rather than grown. There was never an institution for producing administrators any other way, so when the manufacture stopped there was nothing to substitute, and the state spent the eighteenth century governed by men produced by no system at all.

None of that yields a casualty figure. A corpus that counts only bodies will rate this among the mildest orders it contains, and it was mild in a specific and definable sense: it asked little and interfered little. Whether an order that asks little of its subjects and gives them little is thereby a good order is a question the framework should not pretend to settle by counting.

The syllogism, refused four ways

The conqueror's syllogism is unusually attractive here and takes this form: order is necessary; this order gave four centuries of it to a region that had none before and has had recurrent war since; therefore this order was justified.

It has to be refused in four separate ways, and the refusals are not rhetorical.

Refuse the syllogism itself. Durability is a fact about incentive structure and not a verdict. This study has explained precisely why the Ottoman order lasted — a settlement in which each man defending his own position thereby defended the whole, held together by a rule that nothing could be inherited — and that explanation is complete without any reference to justice, merit or the welfare of anyone. An arrangement that survives has demonstrated that it fitted the pressures it met. It has demonstrated nothing else.

Refuse the rigged comparison. The Ottoman order is habitually measured against the Balkan fragmentation that preceded it or the Balkan wars that followed, and neither is a comparison of conquest with self-rule. And in this case the correction cuts unusually hard, because the foreclosed alternative is in the record: the Serbian, Bulgarian and Byzantine polities the conquest ended were themselves conquest states, running the same instruments on the same peasants — a law code that fined a

commoner a hundred perpers for insulting a lord and cut his ears off for holding a council, a religious hierarchy that branded heretics on the face. The comparison is not empire against liberty. It is one empire against several smaller ones, and that cuts against the nationalist ledger exactly as hard as it cuts against the imperial one.

Refuse credit for parsimony. The mildness of Ottoman rule toward its Christian subjects — no forced conversion, no imposed schooling, no surveillance, no press to censor — produced both the communal survival that is genuinely to its credit and the underdevelopment that is genuinely a cost. The same devices caused both, and they were adopted for reasons that had nothing to do with either. The mildness is a fact about what the state wanted, not about its character.

Refuse cynicism. The endowments fed real people twice a day for centuries; the courts heard real cases and sometimes decided them against powerful men; the founders of soup kitchens on the pilgrimage road were not conducting a public relations operation. A built thing that became real is not a lie, and the people formed by this order were not dupes. Naming the structural function of a charitable foundation does not make the bread imaginary.

The distribution, exhibited

The framework's formulation is that a grim accounting is not a balance to be struck but a distribution to be exhibited, because the column that paid and the column that was paid are filled by different people. That is exactly right here and the entries should be laid side by side without a total.

The Bosnian village that lost a son every few years is not the same party as the scholar who ate at the Fatih kitchen twice a day for eight years while he studied. The Anatolian Turcoman whose name went onto a governor's list in 1513 is not the same party as the Bulgarian peasant whose priest was left undisturbed for four hundred years. The boy taken from Negroponte in 1561, who prayed as a Muslim, cooked in the palace kitchens, fought at Cyprus and in Persia, and walked into an Italian church at thirty-seven to say he had never forgotten, is not the same party as the grand vizier who came the same way and died in office with an empire's business in his hands. The janissary of 1500, who was taken from his family and could rise to govern a province, is not the same party as the janissary of 1826, who inherited his place from his father and was burned in a barracks for defending it. And none of them is the same party as the sultan, who was the only person in the arrangement who inherited everything and paid nothing.

No sum can be taken across those rows, and the attempt to take one is what produces both of the bad histories this case attracts.

Reading the accounting against the framework

Two things go back to the card, and only the first is new.

The contribution concerns the archive. This order kept precise records of what it gave and almost none of what it took, and the mechanism is general rather than Ottoman: **a gift creates a party with standing to demand an account, and a taking creates none.** An endowment has a founder, a deed, conditions, administrators who must be held to them, and courts that will hear the complaint — so the loaves are counted. A levy has no beneficiary with standing, so it is recorded as an event and not as a quantity. The instruction that follows should be run on every case in this collection: **ask, of each transaction, whether it generated anybody with an interest in the record surviving, and expect the harms to be undercounted in exact proportion to how few such parties they created.** The Ottoman child levy left no reliable count not because anyone concealed it but because nobody on the losing side of it was owed an accounting, and this is why the corpus's numbers for what orders gave will always be better than its numbers for what they took — a bias built into the sources themselves, which no amount of care in the reading corrects.

And the metabolic test gains its two poles from a single archive. The card asks whether a collapse tore out life-sustaining coordination and predicts the death toll accordingly. This empire supplies both extremes and shows that they come apart completely from the scale of the political event. Its central military institution was destroyed in three hours with a full casualty count and no consequence beyond the dead, because the metabolism sat elsewhere and was untouched. Its metabolism failed for two decades with no institution destroyed, no decree, no battle and no count at all, because the thing that failed was also the thing that measured. **The variable is not whether the order was overthrown but whether the coordination was interrupted** — and the corollary is uncomfortable for a method that works from records: the cheaper an event is to count, the less it probably cost.

Finally, this study's spine ends here, in the column. The empire's founding solution was to take soldiers from its own subjects' children and pay them in claims that could be withdrawn. The children are in the accounting. So are the severed families, the Turcoman pressed toward an orthodoxy that was not his, the peasant who left his land when the levy would not stop, and the men burned in a barracks for having become what the arrangement had stopped needing. And so is the Balkan villager who kept his church, his priest and his calendar for four hundred years because a state that needed only his tithe had no reason to take them. **The same solution produced both entries, and neither cancels the other, and that is the whole of what an honest accounting can say.**

A note on sources. Every figure in this module was written by somebody, and the module has tried to say by whom. The imaret material is the best-documented and comes from Amy Singer's work on the Ottoman public kitchen and on the Jerusalem foundation of Hurrem Sultan, together with Barkan's published balance sheet for the Süleymaniye foundation for 1585–86; the category "poor and wretched, weak and needy" is the endowment's own, quoted in six words from Singer's rendering, and the counts of a thousand loaves at Jerusalem and fifteen hundred fed twice daily at the Fatih complex are hers. These are the most reliable numbers in the module and they describe what the order gave. Tursun Beg's account of the sack of 1453 is an Ottoman official's, quoted at seven words and otherwise paraphrased; the figure of some thirty thousand enslaved is the conventional one and rests on a small number of contemporary accounts, Greek and Ottoman, none of them a count. The child levy's total is not given because no defensible total exists; readers encountering confident figures in the range of several hundred thousand should know that they are extrapolations from the ratio and the frequency, not sums of anything. The Kızılbaş toll is reported only as a range asserted by the chronicle tradition, is contested, and is politically live. The Chios figures are given as the modern literature gives them and the spread is enormous — twenty-five to fifty thousand killed, forty-five to fifty thousand enslaved, out of a pre-massacre population itself estimated at a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousand — and the reader should treat the upper bound with the same suspicion as the lower. The Tripolitsa figure is given at fifteen thousand from the scholarly literature with the note that some accounts run to thirty thousand; both massacres are reported here in the same paragraph deliberately, because the historiography of this war has for two centuries been written by parties who print one and omit the other. The Celali population losses at Kayseri and Amasya are losses of registered taxpayers, not of people, and are taken from one study. The 1826 casualties are the state's own count of men it had just declared traitors. On the omissions section, none of the claims is quantified because none can be; the argument about capital diverted into endowments is an interpretation with a substantial literature on both sides and is entered as an argument. The refusal of the rigged comparison rests on the Serbian law code of 1349 quoted earlier in this study, which is a public-domain primary text and one of the few places where the pre-conquest order describes its own treatment of its own peasants in its own words. And a general caution which is the point of the module's first section: the balance of evidence in this case is systematically tilted toward what the order gave, because giving generated auditors and taking did not, and no reader should mistake the resulting picture for a measurement.

WHAT COULD NOT BE LEFT TO A SON

Module 12 · convergence and divergence — the Ottoman answer read against the others in this collection; the one experiment this empire ran further than anyone; why the same rule produced both its strength and the absence in it that matters most; and the case for the defence, stated whole and answered

The problem everybody had

Every order in this collection faced the same difficulty and none of them invented it. A centre needs capable men — soldiers to hold the ground, administrators to count it, interpreters to make the holding lawful — and the very capacity that makes a man useful is what would allow him to replace the centre. The centre cannot do without the capacity and cannot simply supervise it, because the supervisors are drawn from the same pool.

There are only a few workable answers, which is why unconnected civilisations keep arriving at the same short list. Let the surplus form and send it outward, to a frontier or a crusade or a colonial service. Prevent it forming, by recruiting the martial and administrative core from outside the population that could otherwise supply a rival class. Recruit by demonstrated merit and rotate every success before he can convert ability into a local base. Fragment power deliberately among rival offices. Bind the potential rival by marriage, kinship or shared doctrine. Or sit down in a chair the conquered order had already built and operate its machinery unchanged.

The Ottomans drew from that list and the collection has always classified them under *prevention by outsider recruitment*. That is right and it is not enough, because it names the recruitment and misses what the recruitment was in service of. This study has traced a single rule running underneath every Ottoman institution, and it is sharper and more consequential than the child levy that is its most famous expression.

The rule was that nothing could be left to a son.

One rule, applied everywhere at once

Set the instruments side by side and the pattern is unmistakable, and it is not a series of separate devices that happen to point the same way. It is one proposition enforced at every level of the hierarchy simultaneously.

The cultivator's land was not his; the sovereign held the bare ownership and he held a right of use. The cavalryman's revenue was a grant for a term, reviewed at each survey, unsaleable, unbequeathable, tied to a district he could not leave. The soldier of the household was taken as a child, severed from his family, forbidden marriage, forbidden a trade, forbidden to leave the corps — a man constructed so that his place was his only asset and could not outlive him. The grand vizier held the empire's business with the sultan's seal and lost it when the seal was recalled, and his estate reverted at his death or disgrace. And the dynasty applied the rule to itself: the fratricide clause exists to ensure that a throne has exactly one heir, by eliminating the others, for the order of the world.

There was one exception, and this study found it early. The learned hierarchy were free Muslims, not the sultan's property; their houses were their own; their estates were not confiscated; and their sons could inherit their standing.

That single exception turned out to be the most predictive fact in the case, because **the order failed in exactly the direction the rule was designed to prevent, and it failed first where the rule had never been installed.**

The dates are known and they run in one sequence. The high jurists consolidated into a transmissible nobility of the law across the century after 1550 — the branch that had always been outside the machine, moving first. The household corps followed: marriage permitted from about 1566, sons enrolled from 1579, outsiders admitted from the 1570s, and the child levy abandoned somewhere between 1638 and 1683, not by decree but because the men it had produced preferred their own sons to strangers' children. The tax farms came next, granted for life from 1695 and sold in tradable shares from the 1770s, manufacturing a provincial class holding heritable revenue by purchase. And in 1808 a sultan's government signed a compact with the notables in which the Porte legitimised their estates and declared them inheritable — the founding principle of the whole order formally reversed in a treaty, by men who had arrived in the capital with armies.

Four strata, one movement, one direction, across two and a half centuries. **Every link that acquired the power to transmit its position to its sons thereafter defended the transmission rather than the arrangement.**

Reading it against the others

Now place that beside the collection's other answers, because the comparison produces the case's real contribution.

The Mamluk answer was the same instrument with a different source. A ruling caste recruited by an unearnable criterion — foreign birth, purchase, importation — non-heritable by design and re-bought each generation. The Ottomans ran the identical logic with the harvest moved home, taking their caste from the conquered population itself. The seed for this study guessed that the home harvest was the stronger guarantee, because a man whose roots have been deliberately cut has an interest in the cut holding.

The research says something more interesting and less flattering to the design. **The home harvest was cheaper and less reversible in the wrong direction.** An imported caste remains foreign in every generation, and if the importing stops the caste simply dies out: it cannot become native because it has no native ground to sink into. A caste harvested at home is composed of men whose sons will be born subjects of the same state, in its towns, with property in its markets and families in its quarters — so the moment severance lapses, the caste does not expire; it naturalises. It becomes exactly the hereditary corporation it was built to prevent, and it does so from the inside, without rebellion, by ordinary paternal preference. The Mamluk instrument fails by running out of supply. The Ottoman instrument fails by taking root. Same device, two failure modes, and the difference is where the raw material came from.

The Qing kept office open and caste closed by descent: a Chinese man could reach the Grand Council and never the banners. The Ottoman line was drawn neither by descent nor by creed but by enrolment — a patent, a name in a book, entered in exchange for a service and removable by the same hand. That is a genuinely different boundary and it is the reason a majority of the Balkan cavalry grants in the registers of 1467–69 were held by Christians. But it did not stay that way, and the direction it moved confirms the Qing finding rather than contradicting it: as the frontier stopped expanding and the revenue stopped growing, the boundary hardened from service toward creed and from enrolment toward descent. Two unconnected empires, facing the same fiscal ceiling, moved the same line the same way.

Imperial China answered by rotation on merit, and this collection has already observed that Europe, the Ottomans and China arrived independently at recognisably cousin solutions to one position. What this case adds to that comparison is the fourth term, and it is the one that matters.

Europe's answer was heritability by design, and the Ottoman answer was its exact negation — and the two produced their characteristic strengths and their characteristic absences from the same variable.

The European tenurial settlement granted land in perpetuity in exchange for armed service. That clause installed a permanent civil-war risk, and the political history of medieval Europe is the risk coming due, revolt after revolt. But a class holding land in perpetuity is a class that persists across generations, accumulates, remembers, and can bargain — and what it bargained for, over centuries of quarrels with its kings, became charters, estates, parliaments, chartered towns, corporations, and eventually the whole apparatus that limits rulers. The aristocracy that made European monarchy dangerous is the same aristocracy that made European monarchy limited.

The Ottomans abolished the possibility. They granted armed service the same consideration Europe did — this study found the obligation published on a sliding scale, one armed retainer for each additional three thousand akçe of revenue, the sultan's own consort included — and got none of Europe's civil wars, because the grant could be struck from a register by a clerk and the retinue evaporated with the revenue. That is a superior solution to the problem as stated. It is also the reason there was never an Ottoman estate, assembly, charter, chartered town or corporation, and therefore never a body in which a right could be lodged, a precedent stored, or anything at all accumulated across generations.

A state that prevents inheritance prevents an aristocracy, and thereby prevents everything an aristocracy produces — including the institutions that constrain rulers. That is the collection's sharpest available statement of the trade, and this empire is the case that makes it visible, because it ran the experiment further than anyone and its results are legible at every level from the ploughman to the throne.

What the case adds, module by module

The framework asks each study for one real contribution built across its length rather than a fresh revision every chapter. The contribution above is that one, and the findings below are its working-out at particular joints — offered as refinements to be tested elsewhere, not as separate discoveries.

The settlement's fiction did not fit the three families the card names, so a fourth belongs on it: **eminent domain**, declaring that the sovereign holds the bare ownership of everything and every possessor holds a conditional right derived from him, whose job is neither dispossession nor gift nor market-making but **making every holding revocable**. Under all four sits a rule the case makes visible by running the machinery backwards: **a settlement instrument converts, and the direction is set by what the conqueror needs.** A conqueror who needs a market turns relations into things; one who needs an army turns things into relations, because a relation can be withdrawn and a thing cannot.

From that follows the correction to the card's diagnostic on co-optation. **The consideration is diagnostic only in combination with the tenure.** A grant purchasing armed service is dangerous where the grant is secure and safe where it is revocable.

The extraction module returns a third case for the medium-of-payment test. Beside a levy in kind, which is revenue, and a levy in the conqueror's coin on a coinless household, which is a labour draft, stands **a cash levy on a household that can obtain coin only by selling its crop into a market whose prices the state administers.** Nobody leaves home; the compulsion falls on the harvest instead. So the test must ask not only what a tax may be paid in but **who sets the price of the only thing the payer has to sell.** And on the movement of rates: **an emergency levy becomes an ordinary one by repetition, not by legislation**, and the fossil that marks the ratchet having closed is a standing tax still called extraordinary.

On belief and its absence, three findings sit together and are one instrument seen three ways. **An order pays for withheld formation only where it needs the withheld population's conviction for something**; the Ottomans wanted a tithe, a poll-tax and a name on a register, none of which requires belief, and so left the majority alone for four centuries at no cost. **Surveillance tracks the belief a state is trying to install, not the strangeness of the people it rules** — hence no watch at all over the largest and most foreign population and lists by name for the smallest and closest. And where an apex appoints, empowers and can remove the head of each community, the trusted-information position is neither vacated nor captured but **subcontracted**, which from underneath is indistinguishable from liberty.

On the interpreter class the case answers a question the collection had left open. **Where an apex employs its interpreters, the veto is a licence rather than a lever**, ratifying coalitions that have already formed and never initiating one; and the variable that separates an employed clergy with a veto from an employed clergy without one is not employment but **whether the class's property and descent are inside the ruler's revocability machine.** Employed and owned yields no veto; unemployed and unowned yields a rival; employed and unowned yields exactly what the Ottomans had.

On compliance: **an apex can price defection low without managing the belief of the ruled at all, provided it supplies the producer with a working remedy against his immediate extractor** — and the remedy is nearly free, because it is paid for out of the intermediary's discretion. The corollary is the trap: **an apex that supplies the only remedy has made itself the only possible defendant**, which is why the Anatolian peasantry, having beaten its cavalrymen in court for two centuries, had no move at all when the whole apparatus turned predator, and left.

On liberty: where an order has foreclosed by architecture and no legal person exists to hold a right, **protections migrate into whatever institution is available and wear its clothes** — here the pious endowment, the substance to God and the income to one's sons, held by the one class the sovereign could not seize from. And the counting rule needs a second term: **count not only how many parties would lose by a breach but whether the apex is one of them**, since a liberty the ruler profits by is maximally durable and structurally unusable against him.

On change: the card's four cracks all describe an enforcer whose threat against subjects fails, and this case supplies the configuration where **the cost column empties for the apex instead** — the floor turning around, six sultans deposed or killed by their own household troops, and the rule that follows, that such a ruler cannot reform and can only build a second force in secret and then provoke the first.

And on the accounting: **a gift creates an auditor and a taking does not**, which is why this archive can count the loaves of a Jerusalem kitchen in the 1550s and cannot count the children of the levy — a bias in the sources that no care in the reading corrects.

The case for the defence

The strongest argument against everything above is not a quibble about evidence. It is a substantive case, it is made by serious people, and every clause of it is true. It deserves to be stated whole, in its own voice, before anything is said in reply.

For four centuries this empire gave the Balkans and the Near East something none of their neighbours managed: a single order across an enormous space, containing Orthodox, Armenian, Catholic, Jewish and several Muslim communities, and producing in all that time no war of religion. There is no Ottoman Thirty Years' War, no St Bartholomew's Day, no confessional expulsion from the realm. When Spain expelled its Jews in 1492 the sultan invited them in, and their descendants were still in Salonica four hundred years later. Non-Muslims kept their clergy, their courts, their liturgy, their schools and their calendar untouched, and no Ottoman school was ever built to take them away — which is more than any contemporary Christian monarchy allowed its own minorities, and vastly more than the Orthodox order the conquest replaced allowed its Latins and its heretics, whose own law code branded them on the face and drove them out.

The Ottoman peasant held a registered title he could leave to his sons, enforceable in a court that charged a modest fee and issued him a paper, and he could carry a complaint over his lord's head to the Imperial Council — and the record shows that people of no standing whatever, including non-Muslim women from a Balkan town, made that journey and were heard. The penal codes were written in part to protect him from officials

and fief-holders, and the state's own law made his tenure more secure than his cavalryman's. The soup kitchens fed him when he was destitute, the hospitals took him in, and the roads were policed.

And the child levy, whatever else it was, opened a road that existed nowhere else on earth: from a peasant's hut in Bosnia to the grand vizierate of the greatest empire in the world, on merit, within one lifetime. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha governed under three sultans. Sinan built the Süleymaniye. No European peasant of that century could dream of it, and no Chinese examinee could reach the banners.

That is the case, and this study does not dispute a line of it.

The answer

It is answered in four ways, none of which requires denying anything above.

The comparison is rigged, and it is rigged in both directions. Setting the Ottoman order against contemporary Christian Europe, or against the Balkan wars that followed it, is not a comparison of empire with self-rule; it is a comparison of one conquest order with others. And this case supplies the correction with unusual force, because the foreclosed alternative is in the record in its own words. The Serbian code of 1349 that the conquest superseded fined a commoner a hundred perpers for insulting a lord, cut off his ears for holding a council, and ordered a heretic branded on the face and driven out. The order the Ottomans replaced was not liberty; it was a smaller and harsher version of the same thing. That refutes the nationalist ledger exactly as thoroughly as it refutes the imperial one, and both should stop using it.

The mildness and the underdevelopment have one cause, so the first cannot be claimed as a virtue without the second being entered as its price. The state left its Christian subjects entirely alone because it wanted nothing from them that belief supplies — a tithe, a poll-tax, a name in a register, and periodically a son. That same indifference produced the four centuries of communal survival which are genuinely to its credit, and produced the fact that after four centuries the population was left almost exactly where it had been found: no school built, no press, no chartered town, no corporation, nothing accumulated in any body that outlived its members. Credit for parsimony has to be refused. An order that asks little and gives little is not thereby generous; it is cheap, and cheapness has a bill that arrives later and is paid by somebody else.

The route was real and it opened for a person and never for a people. A Bosnian boy could become grand vizier; his village gained nothing whatever by it, and lost him. The mechanism that made the route work — total severance, the cutting of family, language, name and faith — is the same mechanism that made it costless to the

community he came from and useless to it. And the offer was not one anybody made to him: he was taken. To call a levy of children a ladder is to describe the outcome for the handful who reached the top and to say nothing at all about the arrangement, which was designed to produce men with no exterior and succeeded.

And the deepest answer is that the achievement and the failure are the same design, which is why neither can be used to dispose of the other. Non-heritability gave this empire an army without a nobility, a bureaucracy without dynasties, a ruler no faction could bind, and four centuries in which no baron ever raised a private war — and it gave it, by the identical stroke, no estate, no assembly, no charter, no corporation, no institution capable of surviving a bad sultan or constraining a good one, and nothing whatever in which a right could be lodged. When the design finally gave way, stratum by stratum, there was nothing underneath it. Europe's aristocracy was simultaneously the thing that made its monarchies violent and the thing that made them limited; the Ottomans abolished the possibility of an aristocracy and received, precisely as the trade required, a state that was internally peaceful, administratively formidable and institutionally empty.

That is not a verdict on the men who built it. They faced a real problem, chose from a short menu with the materials at hand, and their answer worked for longer than most. **It is a statement of what the answer cost, and the cost was paid in a currency nobody at the time knew how to count** — which is why the empire's own accounts can tell us how many loaves left a Jerusalem kitchen in 1550 and cannot tell us anything at all about what was not built.

A note on sources. This module makes no new factual claims and every specific in it has been established, with its sources and its uncertainties, in the eleven modules preceding. The comparative material is drawn from the other studies in this collection — on the Mamluk military caste, on the Qing banner boundary, on the Umayyad relation to the men who read their doctrine, and on the collection's own comparison of the European, Ottoman and Chinese answers to a single structural position — and the comparisons are the present author's, offered as hypotheses that the next case may break. Two of them should be flagged as more speculative than the rest. The claim that a home-harvested slave elite naturalises where an imported one expires is an inference from two cases and would need a third to be worth much. And the claim that European heritability produced the institutions that limit rulers is a very large historical proposition compressed into a sentence; it is defended at length elsewhere in the scholarship and cannot be defended here, and a reader who rejects it should note that the module's central finding — that this empire's strengths and its institutional emptiness came from one rule — stands without it. The case for the defence in the

penultimate section is stated as its serious proponents state it and no clause of it is disputed; where it rests on figures, those figures are the ones given earlier in this study with their ranges intact. The Serbian code of 1349 is quoted from the same public-domain translation used in this study's opening, and is used here for the same reason: it is one of the very few places where the order a conquest displaced describes, in its own words and without apology, what it did to its own people.